

Reasons for part-time employment

Powody zatrudnienia w niepełnym wymiarze godzin

Grzegorz Wojtkowiak

Poznań University of Economics and Business, e-mail: g.wojtkowiak@ue.poznan.pl; ORCID: 0000-0001-8467-0260

Abstract

The article deals with one of the symptoms of making work more flexible, i.e. part-time work. The reason for choosing such a problem is low part-time employment in Poland. The main goal is to answer the question: what can motivate and what actually motivates employees to work on a part-time basis. The text presents the issues in relation to other common and contemporary phenomena on the labor market, as well as the scale of part-time work using current statistical data. On the basis of own research conducted with the use of a survey in the group of professionally active women, the role of motives and identified advantages of part-time work were indicated.

Keywords: flexibility, working time, sustainable development, flexicurity, work-life balance.

Streszczenie

Artykuł podejmuje temat jednego z objawów uelastyczniania pracy: pracy w niepełnym wymiarze czasu. Skala tego zjawiska jest zaskakująco niska w porównaniu z innymi krajami UE. Głównym celem artykułu jest odpowiedź na pytanie: jakie motywy mogą skłonić i jakie skłaniają do podjęcia pracy w niepełnym wymiarze. W tekście umiejscowiono zagadnienie na tle innych powszechnych i współczesnych zjawisk na rynku pracy, wskazano również skalę pracy na część etatu z wykorzystaniem aktualnych danych statystycznych. Na podstawie badań własnych prowadzonych w oparciu o ankiety w grupie aktywnych zawodowo kobiet, wskazano rolę motywów i identyfikowanych zalet pracy w niepełnym wymiarze.

Słowa kluczowe: elastyczność, czas pracy, zrównoważony rozwój, flexicurity, work-life balance.

1. Introduction

Almost 90 years ago, Keynes predicted that we would be working approximately 15 hours a week. While in fact in the last century weekly working time has significantly shortened, unfortunately, there are considerable inequalities in this area – not only between individual countries [Leoński 2015], but also between individual social groups [Kossek, Lautsch 2018]. At the same time, entrepreneurs are trying to adapt to changing trends – there is both a significant shift of production tasks to countries with cheaper workforce, but also a significant adaptation of working conditions in countries where the level of development and social programs affect the amount of labor costs.

One of the possibilities is to use the part-time employment, which may be caused either by the need of the entrepreneur or the employee himself/herself. At the same time, the low scale of using such contracts in Poland compared to other European countries is surprising, given the significant imbalance in the labor market and the paradoxical low employment rate and simultaneous staff shortages. The reasons for this state of affairs should therefore be seen both on the side of employers and employees.

The purpose of this article is to learn about one of the reasons for the low level of part-time employment in Poland, related to the motivations of potential employees. Its aim is to answer the question: what motivations lead to part-time work and what is their significance. The concept of work flexibility is the background for undertaking the deliberations, however it will be considered mainly from the perspective of employees rather than employers.

The results used in the article are part of a wider research project aimed at understanding the preferences and attitudes of employees towards flexible forms of employment and developing guidelines and good practices for entrepreneurs. The article is based on a part of own study, which includes a group of professionally active women (who are the group, which usually work part-time). The research was conducted in connection with lectures and workshops carried out as part of the “Woman in the main role” initiative. The survey tool was used in an electronic form and the analysis was carried out using the Statistica program. The selection of the sample (based on the accessibility criterion), as well as advance of project, makes it impossible to formulate absolute conclusions and to generalize them, but allows to narrow down the analyzed variables.

The article firstly presents the aspect of working time in the background of other phenomena in the modern labor market, which is an introduction to present the scale of part-time employment with the use of secondary data – including the indications of other authors and statistical data. Next, the results of the author’s own research are presented.

Part-time work means an employee whose normal working hours, calculated on a weekly average basis or on average over a maximum employment period of one year, are less than the normal number of hours worked for a comparable full-time employee [Council Directive 97/81/EC].

2. Work time against other phenomena on the labor market

Keynes who was observing the increase in productivity as quoted in the introduction, could actually assume that with the regulating role of the state, it would allow a fair distribution of the effects of progress. Nevertheless, in fact many other phenomena have occurred which Keynes could not foresee, in particular the level of globalization, the related dynamics and pace of technological progress, as well as the growth of social needs (and the growth of consumption). These phenomena have forced the pursuit of greater flexibility of enterprises, and thus also changes in the sphere of industrial relations affecting the employees themselves, who are affected by the variability of time and place of work, scope of duties or remuneration [Skowron-Mielnik 2012].

These trends affect changes in the sphere of relations between employers and employees, including the emergence of negative phenomena. Changes related directly to the flexibility of employment include the creation of a so-called precariat. This concept [Knapińska 2014] is associated with a group of low-paid employees who live in uncertainty about the place of work (and its durability), which also translates into uncertainty of housing and even identity.

An answer to this phenomenon is the introduction of the idea (promoted within the European Union) to the labor market policy and social policy, i.e. flexicurity. It consists of combining the flexibility of liberal labor markets with the security of welfare states; although the experience of even the most developed countries in this area shows that implementing these ideas in practice is extremely difficult and costly [Bredgaard, Madsen 2018].

At the same time, in the most developed countries a number of negative phenomena resulting from the so-called civilization diseases are affecting the labor market directly. This applies to the level of stress, work-related diseases, workaholism or occupational burnout [Stoeber, Damian 2016; Pandey, Sharma 2016]. A solution to these problems, which also translates into relationships within enterprises, is the work-life balance concept. While its individual implementation is assessed very positively [Pradhan, Jena Kumari 2016], systemic solutions aimed, for example, at reducing working time, bring negative effects for the economy; a significant example is the introduction of a 35-hour working week in France [Popiel-Schneider 2015]. The question then arises whether the introduction of flexibility in the form of part-time employment may be one of the alternatives to systemic changes, and at the same time a response to the needs of some employees.

3. Part-time work in Poland and in Europe

Understanding the importance of the problem of part-time employment, and in particular the legitimacy of taking up a job on the Polish market requires learning about the scale of the phenomenon (see Table 1).

In the European Union in 2017 32% of women and 9% of men worked on the basis of part-time contracts, and this figure is

growing [Dane statystyczne... 2017]. The phenomenon applies mostly to women, but this situation in individual countries is very diverse. The majority of women worked in such a system in the Netherlands (76%, and 27% of men), Austria (47%), and Germany (46%). At the same time in Poland in 2017 only 10% of women worked part-time (against 4% of men) – with the downward trend of this share; although the smallest share of part-time employees was in Bulgaria– below 2% [Życie kobiet i mężczyzn... 2018; Dane statystyczne... 2017].

When interpreting the above data it is also worth noting that in Poland there is one of the lowest employment rates in the European Union countries – at the level of 60% [Grewiński 2017, p. 72; Eurostat 2017], and at the same time one of the lowest unemployment rates. This paradoxical situation, together with a significant demand for work in Poland, confirms the legitimacy of the question about the possibility of increased interest in contracts for part-time work in the future.

Table 1. Working at the age of 15 and more part-time for various reasons

Data	Women	Man
Total part-time working (in % of all employees)	10.6	4.4
Selected reasons for part-time work (in % working part-time)		
A person prefers an incomplete dimension	51.0	50.0
Care for children, other people, other personal or family reasons	16.5	4.5
Inability to find a full-time job	14.8	15.8
Education	7.6	12.6
Disease, disability	4.5	10.4

Source: [Kobiety i mężczyźni... 2018]

One of the reasons for the low share of part-time contracts in Poland can be seen in the popularity of other forms of employment: work based on a contract agreement, on the so-called self-employment or illegal work. In particular, the widespread use of so-called contract-related agreement, associated with their cost-attractiveness (lower costs charged to net wages), may affect the scale of the use of part-time employment contracts.

Other reasons for this phenomenon can be sought in the practice of using part-time contracts (see Table 2). The average full-time Pole worked significantly longer than employees of the EU-28 and EU-15 countries (data for 2004-2015), although this difference is decreasing: from over 43 hours per week in 2004 to over 42 in 2015, or about 0.8 hours more than the EU average [Jarmołowicz, Kuźmar 2017, p. 83]. At the same time, there was a significantly higher difference: 1.7 hours, observed in the case of part-time work. This may justify the unattractiveness of part-time contracts for employees in Poland.

At the same time, when considering statistical data on the occurrence of the phenomenon and looking for its causes, it is worth paying attention to the aspect of supply of part-

Table 2. Weekly working time of employees based on the working time and gender in Poland and EU countries (in 2015)

Man/ Woman	Average (hours)	Full time (hours)	Part-time (hours)	Percentage of part-time workers (%)
Polska	42.4/ 38.7	43.4/ 40.7	22/ 21.9	4.2/ 9.9
UE-28	40.1/ 33.6	42.4/ 40.0	19.1/ 20.5	8.9/ 32.1
UE-15	39.8/ 32.4	42.4/ 39.8	18.9/ 20.5	10.0/ 37.9

Source: [Jarmołowicz, Kuźmar 2017, p. 86].

-time workplaces – reasons that may limit their attractiveness to employers. The main issue here is the already mentioned alternative: the conclusion of civil contracts is more advantageous in terms of costs, involves significantly lower tax burdens, but also the avoidance of many obligations contained in the labor regulation and other provisions related to employment contracts (from holidays or periods of illness, to periods of notice). In addition, the administrative cost of servicing one employee (salary settlement, working time settlement, keeping employee records) is a significant cost independent of the full-time job. It is therefore more advantageous to employ one full-time employee than two part-time employees.

However, employers' choices are only one of the elements influencing the economic reality. The motives of the employees themselves are the other.

4. Positive aspects of part-time work identified by employees

Among the benefits for the employee (social and employee-related benefits), resulting from employment under part-time contracts, the following can be distinguished (on the basis of: [Matuszewska-Janica, Witkowska 2013, p. 112; Baranowska-Rataj, Rynko 2013; Wyszniński 2016; Andysz, Najder, Merczek-Kot 2014]):

- a way to decrease the employment reduction in enterprises during restructuring,
- activation of women (the ability to reconcile professional duties with family life) and people from unemployment threat groups (e.g. disabled people),
- an increase in employment opportunities in rural areas and of high unemployment rate,
- entering or returning to the employee's labor market after his or her long-term absence,
- a way to get first professional experience,
- getting to know the working conditions in various companies and on different positions,
- greater freedom in terms of shaping working time and balancing life according to the "work-life balance" concept.

At the same time, not much research concerns direct and detailed motives of the employees themselves, both those who have experience in part-time work and who can consider such an offer, which is the subject of this article. The study aimed at learning the basis for decisions and the identified advantages of part-time work was carried out in 2018 on a sample of 71 women. The

survey used a questionnaire containing closed and semi-open questions enabling the indication of additional answers.

Table 3. The structure of the research sample

Category		Research sample
Age	<26	31%
	26-37	46%
	38-49	20%
	>50	2%
Education	Vocational education	6%
	Middle	16%
	Higher: BA degree	20%
	Higher: MA degree	61%
Working profile	Economic	36%
	Social	42%
	Mathematical	4%
	Technical	17%
Position	Worker	28%
	Expert	41%
	Lower and middle management	21%
	Top level management	10%
Income per person in a household	<1000 PLN	10%
	1001-2000 PLN	28%
	2001-3000 PLN	28%
	>3000 PLN	34%

Source: based on own research.

4.1. Motivation to part-time working

Respondents were answering the question “What factors would affect your decision to take part-time employment?”. In the opinion of the respondents, the family situation as well as the satisfying financial situation were marked as high and very high. Similarly, illness, disability or life strategy were also pointed out as significant. However, the factor related to having part-time employment in another job was also assessed in a similar way. The occurrence of this group of responses (and its importance) draws attention to a very heterogeneous group of motives. On the one hand, these can be motives consistent with the idea of work-life balance (including also a situation forced by life), and on the other hand, they are closely related to economic factors. What is important, the respondents also indicated their own answers consistent with the above observation, listing among the motives of making decisions about partial employment, among others combining a full-time job with own business. The weight of economic factors (such as the aforementioned wealth situation) was also indicated stating that part-time employment would also be motivated by a salary in the amount close to a full-time one. Such an indication, although individual and unreal, along with other factors shows that there is a group of employees for whom the economic factors will be the most important criterion for adapting flexible forms of employment; which in the future is worth associating with the wealth situation.

Detailed results are presented in the picture below.

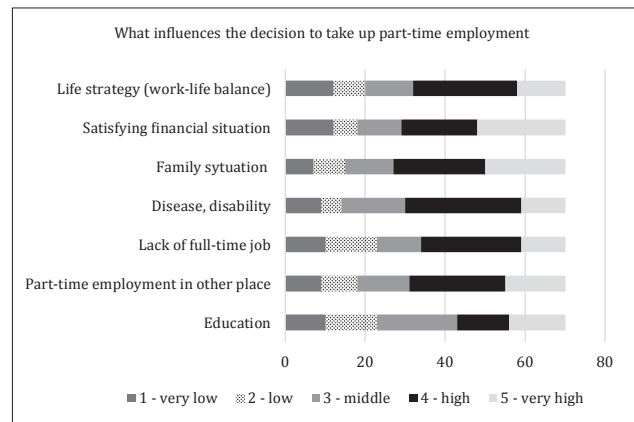


Figure 1. Motivation to part-time working

Source: based on own research.

At the same time, in order to verify statistical significance, Chi² Pearson and Chi² NW significance tests were used (the table below only presents the results of significant dependencies). With the use of both tests, the basic condition is the participation of a given population at the level of at least 5% of the sample, which resulted in the elimination of women in the age group 50-63 and over 63 years from the response.

The statistical significance between a given group (category of respondent) and individual factors influencing the decision on part-time employment was not confirmed by both indicators at the same time. The Chi square test of the highest credibility was confirmed by the occurrence of statistical significance among the female population specified due to: the level of education and the family situation and starting/continuing education, as well as the position held and the family situation.

Table 4. Selected statistical significance data for the question about motives for part-time work

Type of education	Chi-sqr.	df	p
Family situation			
Chi ² Pearson	19.32496	df=12	p=.08098
Chi ² NW	21.14606	df=12	p=.04828
Education			
Chi ² Pearson	17.64609	df=12	p=.12687
Chi ² NW	20.99661	df=12	p=.05043
Position			
Family situation			
Chi ² Pearson	17.23327	df=12	p=.14103
Chi ² NW	22.04846	df=12	p=.03698

Source: based on own research.

The highest importance of the family situation affecting the decision about part-time employment was made by women with secondary education, for whom this factor was of high and very high importance. Also for most women with a bachelor's

or engineer’s level education and women with higher education, the family situation turned out to have a significant impact on the willingness to work part-time. Among women with the lowest level of education, this factor did not turn out to be the most important.

The family situation turned out to be very high and of high importance when considering the decision about part-time employment for women with the lowest position in the organizational structure. At the same time, among the managers of lower and upper level, this factor was not the most important as opposed to top-level managers.

Statistical significance has been confirmed in the female population and the factor influencing the decision on part-time employment was the start/continuation of education. The highest significance turned out to be for women with secondary education. In this group none of them considered the factor’s weight to be lower than average. Differentiated responses shaped among women with other levels of employment, although a slight advantage of the higher significance of the factor was noticed among women with higher education. For women with vocational education and with a bachelor’s or engineer’s degree, starting and continuing education did not have a significant impact on deciding on part-time employment. Interestingly, no statistical significance was noted for the group of respondents with and without part-time job experience.

4.2. Advantages od part-time work

Analyzing the employees’ intentions, the respondents were also asked the question: “What are the most important advantages for you when considering the decision to take part-time work?”. Among the advantages, which level of impact was assessed as high and very high, most often indicated the possibility of development or retraining, as well as the possibility of employing a full-time employee for a given employer. Detailed results are shown in the figure below.

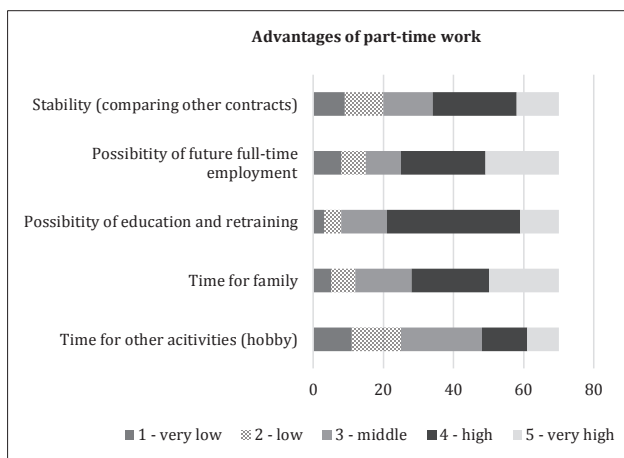


Figure 2. Advantages of part-time work

Source: based on own research.

By submitting detailed answers to the analysis with two materiality tests (the table below presents only the results

of significant dependencies), the correlation between the occupational profile and the advantage of taking part-time work was the possibility of later full-time employment. For women with a mathematical profile, this option had the lowest importance. Interestingly, the dominant part of women representing the technical profile considered this feature as important, and for none of them the option of later employment was average and least significant. Women with economic profile highly rated this option, although also 48% of women humanists found it important and very important.

Table 5. Selected statistical significance data for the question about the advantages of part-time work

Work profile	Chi-sqr.	df	p
The possibility of full-time			
Chi ² Pearson	31.87402	df=12	p=.00145
Chi ² NW	29.93500	df=12	p=.00286
Education	Chi-sqr.	df	p
The possibility of professional development or retraining			
Chi ² Pearson	29.24658	df=12	p=.00362
Chi ² NW	18.71062	df=12	p=.09576
Work position	Chi-sqr.	df	p
More time for the family			
Chi ² Pearson	20.42116	df=12	p=.05953
Chi ² NW	21.12222	df=12	p=.04862

Source: based on own research.

Chi-square test by Pearson confirmed the relationship in the group of women distinguished due to their education and the possibility of professional development or retraining. This advantage turned out to be of high importance for women with secondary education, although it was also important for women with higher education. Women with a bachelor’s or engineer’s degree rated this option somewhat lower. Extreme results were obtained among women with vocational education. For half of them the possibility of professional development or retraining was of high importance, and for the remaining part very low.

The Chi-square test of the highest credibility was confirmed by the dependence of women occupying a given position and the advantage of taking part-time work, which was to share more time with the family. This factor was of the highest importance among women occupying the lowest positions in the organizational structure. Among women in managerial positions, this trend was reversed. Time for family was slightly more important for women top managers in relation to those occupying lower and middle management level.

5. Findings and further research proposal

The obtained results show that the studied group, although deliberately selected and including a group of professionally active people, was very heterogeneous in terms of answers. The differences concerned, in particular, people due to their education and professional profile, as well as their position.

This requires a very individual approach to part-time employment.

Similarly, there are clearly different motives for taking (or interest in) part-time work. On the one hand, this is a group of factors related to the broadly understood work-life balance approach. On the other hand, factors related to economic conditions were similarly highly valued, or a group of respondents was explicitly indicated that they would undertake part-time work, provided having another part-time job or making it possible to take up full-time employment later.

Such answers allow us to hypothesize that the small scale of part-time employment may be correlated with the level of social wealth and the property distinction should be a factor verified in future research. The above results should also encourage the study of not only employees but also, considering the importance of economic factors, the group of people who are voluntarily outside the labor market.

An additional general indication for further research, regardless of the scope of the verified flexibility and subject of the study (entrepreneur or employer), is the intention to distinguish between two aspects: intent and expectation in relation to the actual attitude or behavior. The difference between expectation and the accepted state, especially among employees, may translate into their commitment, and thus to loyalty, efficiency or innovation, so sought after in the labor market.

6. Conclusion

Summarizing, it is worth noting that the importance of the issue is related to the imbalance in the labor market: low employment rate and low unemployment at the same time. This situation is certainly influenced by many factors: from social policy and labor policy pursued by the state, to individual preferences of individual social groups. At the same time, part-time employment may be the way to solve this imbalance. Understanding the preferences of employees, the motives of their behavior, fears, and identified threats can help entrepreneurs adapt their offers to the expectations of the employees they seek.

This article, the data and the hypotheses set in it should also encourage further exploration and discussion not only of entrepreneurs, but also institutions shaping social infrastructure and labor market infrastructure, to get closer to achieve the idea of flexicurity.

References

- Andysz A., Najder A., Merez-Kot D., 2014, *Organizacyjne i indywidualne uwarunkowania korzystania z rozwiązań sprzyjających równoważeniu życia zawodowego i prywatnego*, Medycyna Pracy, 65(1), pp. 119-129.
- Baranowska-Rataj A., Rynko M., 2013, *Dostosowanie sposobu organizacji czasu pracy do obowiązków rodzinnych w Polsce*, Studia Demograficzne, 164(2), pp. 59-79.
- Bredgaard T., Madsen P., 2018, *Farewell flexicurity? Danish flexicurity and the crisis*. Transfer: *European Review of Labour and Research*, 04.
- Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC—Annex: Framework agreement on part-time work, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1414663458618&uri=CELEX:31997L0081> (29.03.2019).
- Dane statystyczne dotyczące zatrudnienia, 2017, Eurostat, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Employment_statistics/pl#.C5.B9r.C3.B3d.C5.82a_i_dost.C4.99pno.C5.9B.C4.87_danych (29.03.2019).
- Grewiński M., 2017, *Polska polityka społeczna w latach 1989–2016 – sukcesy i niepowodzenia*, Studia BAS, 2(50).
- Jarmołowicz W., Kuźmar S., 2017, *Normatywny a faktyczny czas pracy w Polsce i Unii Europejskiej – stan i uwarunkowania zmian*, Studia i Prace WNEiZ US, 50, pp. 75-90.
- Knapieńska M., 2014, *Prekariat jako zjawisko występujące na współczesnym rynku pracy w Polsce i Unii Europejskiej*, Studia Oeconomica Posnaniensia, 2(7), pp. 268.
- Kobiety i mężczyźni na rynku pracy, 2018, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, https://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5821/1/7/1/kobiety_i_mezczyzni_na_ryнку_pracy_2018.pdf (29.03.2019).
- Kossek E.E., Lautsch B.A., 2018, *Work–Life Flexibility for Whom? Occupational Status and Work–Life Inequality in Upper, Middle, and Lower Level Jobs*, *Academy of Management Annals*, 12(1), pp. 5-36.
- Leoński W., 2015, *WORK–LIFE BALANCE jako praktyka koncepcji społecznej odpowiedzialności biznesu*, *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Zarządzanie*, 42(1), pp. 127-137.
- Matuszewska-Janica A., Witkowska D., 2013, *Zróżnicowanie płac ze względu na płeć: zastosowanie drzew klasyfikacyjnych*. *Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu. Taksonomia*, 279, pp. 58-66.
- Pandey S., Sharma V., 2016, *Understanding work-related stress, job conditions, work culture and workaholism phenomenon as predictors of HR crisis: An empirical study of the Indian IT sector*, *International Journal of Human Capital and Information Technology Professionals (IJHCITP)*, 7(2), pp. 68-80.
- Popiel-Schneider F., 2015, *Skutki gospodarcze wprowadzenia 35-godzinnego tygodnia pracy we Francji*, *Optimum. Studia Ekonomiczne*, 6(78).
- Pradhan R.K., Jena L.K., Kumari I.G., 2016, *Effect of work–life balance on organizational citizenship behaviour: Role of organizational commitment*, *Global Business Review*, 17(3_suppl.), pp. 15-29.
- Skowron-Mielnik B., 2012, *Elastyczna organizacja pracy w przedsiębiorstwie*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Poznaniu, Poznań.
- Stoeber J., Damian L.E., 2016, *Perfectionism in employees: Work engagement, workaholism, and burnout*. In *Perfectionism, health, and well-being*. Springer, Cham, pp. 265-283.
- Wyszyński R., 2016, *Zjawisko niepełnego wykorzystania zasobu pracy – czym jest i co mówi o rynku pracy w Polsce*, *Bank i Kredyt*, 3, pp. 267-284.
- Życie kobiet i mężczyzn w Europie. Portret statystyczny, 2018, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, <https://stat.gov.pl/kobiety-i-mezczyzni-w-europie/index.html?lang=pl> (29.03.2019).