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PART-TIME WORK IN TURKEY

Serap PALAZ*

ABSTRACT:

In this paper, the presence and extent of part-time employment in the Turkish labour market is examined. We attempt to provide the theoretical explanations of part-time work -including the theories in terms of both demand and supply - observed in many empirical studies. It is found that although, part-time work is a recent phenomena in Turkey it has started to grow after the 1990s and is assumed to increase in the future. In addition, part-time employment is largely dominated by females in Turkey as in most of the other countries. We suggest that although part-time employment has some drawbacks in the labour market, in fact it has some advantages as well; it stimulates employment, stimulates flexibility in companies, and helps the combination of paid and unpaid work, training, leisure, and civic activities. Therefore, if equal treatment of full-timers and part-timers would be established in the law and if it is freely chosen by workers it seems a good option for people who do not want to work full-time and thus it is worth encouraging.

1. Introduction

Part-time employment shows a large and rapid expansion in share of employment in many OECD countries since the 1980s. At the beginning, the growth of part-time jobs in most European countries seemed to encourage married women to take jobs in the developing service sector. Recently, part-time work is seen as a solution to reduce unemployment across Europe, increasing the overall employment rate.

Indeed, it has been suggested that, part-time work provides many benefits for both workers and employers besides the public praise of its supposed advantages of reducing unemployment. For employers, it permits greater flexibility in responding to market requirements and also provides productivity gains. For employees, it creates the possibility to combine paid work with caring tasks, further education, voluntary work or leisure. For policy-makers, it is seen as a solution to unemployment.

Definition of Part-time Work

Before analysing the part-time work, we need to define what we mean by part-time jobs. In the ILO Convention No.175, the definition of part-time work is as follows; "the term 'part time worker' means an employed person whose normal hours of work are less than those of comparable full-time workers". The reason that the concept of a "comparable" worker is mentioned is that "the number of hours per week or per month that are regarded as being normal for full-time employees vary considerably according to the profession or activity concerned" (ILO, 1992, p.5). According to each country's national law, this legal definition has been interpreted differently and as is seen in literature, there are lots of different variations of legal and statistical definitions of part-time work between countries. For instance, in France a person working up to four-fifths of the normal hours of work is considered working part-time. In Germany, a person is classified as a part-time worker if the contractual working time is less than that of full time workers. In the United Kingdom, a person needs to be considered a part-time worker if he/she works less than 30 hours a week (Bastelaer, Lemaitre and Marianna, 1997). In Turkey, according to Article 13 of the new labour law, the term 'part-time worker' refers to an

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employee whose normal hours of work is less than the normal hours of work of a comparable full time worker. In this study, for international analyses of part-time work, we use a threshold value of 30 usual working hours per week as the OECD's defining criterion for part-time work (OECD, 2002).

2. Theoretical Perspective on Part-time Work

As suggested by Blossfeld and Hakim (1997) there are two sides of explanation of theoretical analyses of part-time work, namely, demand and supply which are overlapping and related to with each other.

The Supply Side Theories

One type of explanation of supply side theories of part-time work suggests that part-time work is universally functional for the household and society. This 'functionalist' theory separates between men's role as a wage earner and main breadwinner and women's primary role as a mother and wife who is responsible for child caring and housework and whose secondary role is wage earning. Thus, part-time work is more appropriate than full-time work for women who can combine their two roles. This kind of gender division was seen in most societies especially in more conventional ones such as Turkey. Similarly, Becker (1981) argues that women anticipate future labour market interruptions related to raising children and running homes and for this reason prepare particular types of 'human capital' investment in training and education. However, men prepare for a more continuous labour market commitment in their role as a main breadwinner (Fagan and O'reilly, 1998; 3). In sum, these explanations indicate that part-time employment is ideal for both women and for their families.

The functionalist theory and Becker's theory are criticised on the ground that these approaches are teleological: principally the gender division of labour is argued to be an efficient arrangement on the basis that it would not continue otherwise. In addition, "both approaches are largely premised on a consensual understanding of household decision-making, thus neglecting conflict and unequal power relations between household members" (Fagan and O'reilly, 1998; 3).

Moreover, Hakim (1991; 103-104) suggests that being part-time employed is women's own decision and aspiration rather than what is suitable to the family division of labour. She proposes that women are largely divided into two groups; one group of women prefers a more traditional housewife role being 'grateful slaves', where the other group prefers to work outside and commit to an employment career - 'self-made women'. To the first group of women, working outside has a secondary and subordinate role in their life and they generally find it more appropriate to work as part-timers. Although her assumption received some attention in contemporary labour market debate, it was criticised on the basis that this thesis neglects the structural constraints and beliefs within which women act. As known, people's attitudes can be affected by environmental factors and develop over time in an adaptive process, responding to opportunities and experiences (Dex, 1988).

Demand Side Theories

Two contrary assumptions on the demand side explanation of part-time work are discussed in literature. One of them is the 'reserve army' hypothesis which assumes that married women with children serve as a key 'reserve army' of labour. Therefore, any changes in the overall demand for labour, affect their employment in general and their part-time work in particular. According to this theory, when there is a steep economic growth (or decline), women's part-time and full-time employment will increase (or decrease).

On the other hand, the 'labour flexibility' hypothesis proposes that "part-time work as the dominant form of atypical or non-standard employment is to a large extent the result of employment shortages" (Blossfeld and Hakim, 1997, p. 8). Employers become powerful and unions weak during the unemployment periods and this leads to more flexible work arrangements of all kinds. When overall demand for labour declines, the level of part-time work should increase in all countries. This proved to be valid in all Western European countries and in the USA during the economic crisis of the 1980s and early 1990s and in Southern countries after the end of the Second World War and up to the early 1970s (Blossfeld and Hakim, 1997).

In like manner, nowadays employers work in increasingly uncertain and competitive environments and need to cope with that, especially during crisis they find it very convenient to hire part-timers. They are aware of the advantages of part-time work, which is seen to be more flexible and less expensive than full-time work.

Moreover, many researchers imply that changes in women's part-time work do not only depend on the increase or decrease of the overall level of employment, but also on the development of certain types of jobs in modern societies. In recent years, there has been an effective shift from manual and productive jobs to non-manual services and administrative jobs where part-time work is prevalent (Fagan and O'Reilly, 1998).

Beechey and Perkins (1987) claim that flexibility is often gendered. When the labour force is predominantly female, employers are more likely to employ female part-timers instead of requiring flexibility from men such as overtime and shift-work. In addition, Rubery (1988) argues that part-time work is typical for women in most countries. For example, over 90 percent of part-time workers in Britain are women. Part-time jobs are extremely segregated from full-time jobs and especially from men's full time jobs.

Finally, we can say that women's part-time employment is affected by the interaction between household conditions, women's own decisions, employer's behaviour and labour market policies and regulation.

3. An Overview of Part-Time Employment

Table 1 shows that there has been a general increase in the proportion of part-time employment in every OECD country since the 1980s. As is mentioned by Bolle (2001), this increase in the proportion of part-time employment can be expected to continue because its main driving forces -women's growing labour force participation, employer's wish for flexibility and service sector development- seem to persist. In the case of

Turkey, as seen in Table 1, part-time work is a recent phenomenon; therefore there is no recorded data on it before the 1990s. However, part-time work started to grow after the 1990s and it is assumed to increase in the future because of the reasons mentioned above (9.2 percent in 1990 and 9.0 percent in 2000).

Table 2 reveals that women dominate part-time employment in every OECD country. Likewise, studies on part-time work (Beechey and Perkins, 1987; Rubery and Fagan, 1995; Pur, 1991; Eser, 1997) show that in most countries part-time work tends to be concentrated in conventional female activities such as clericals, sales and services sectors which pay low wages, give few fringe benefits and little job security.

Table 1. Proportion of Part-time Employment to Total Employment in OECD Countries^a, 1983 - 2000

Country	1983	1990	1997	2000
Australia ^{b,c}	27.1	22.6	26.0	26.2
Austria	-	-	10.8	12.2
Belgium	9.7	14.2	16.2	19.0
Canada	16.8	17.0	19.1	18.1
Czech Republic	-	-	3.4	3.3
Denmark	19.2	19.2	17.1	15.7
Finland	8.4	7.5	9.4	10.4
France	8.9	12.2	14.9	14.2
Germany	-	13.4	15.8	17.6
Greece	6.9	6.7	8.2	5.4
Hungary	-	-	3.3	3.2
Iceland ^d	-	22.2	22.4	20.4
Ireland	7.1	9.8	15.2	18.5
Italy	7.8	8.8	11.3	12.2
Japan ^{b,e}	17.5	19.2	23.3	23.1
Luxemburg	7.3	7.6	11.1	13.0
Mexico	-	-	15.9	13.5
Netherlands	18.5	28.2	29.1	32.1
New Zealand	-	19.6	22.4	22.6
Norway	-	21.8	21.0	20.3
Poland ^b	-	-	11.9	12.8
Portugal	-	6.8	10.2	9.2
Spain	-	4.6	7.9	7.8
Sweden	-	14.5	14.2	14.0
Switzerland ^{c,f}	-	22.1	24.0	24.4
Turkey	-	9.2	5.7	9.0
United Kingdom	18.4	20.1	22.9	23.0
United States ^f	15.4	13.8	13.6	12.8
European Union ^g	-	13.3	15.7	16.3
Total OECD ^g	-	14.3	15.3	15.3

a) Part-time employment refers to persons who usually work less than 30 hours per week in their main job.

b) Data are based on actual hours worked.

c) Part-time employment based on hours worked at all jobs.

d) Data 1990 refer to 1991.

e) Less than 35 hours per week.

f) Data are for wage and salary workers only.

g) For above countries only.

• Nil or negligible.

Sources: OECD, 1997, Employment Outlook, Table F. p.178, for 1983. OECD, 2002, Employment Outlook, Table E. p.319, for 1990, 1997 and 2000.

In Turkey, part-time work appears to be largely a female phenomenon. According to the United Nations statistics, the percentage of adult employment that is part-time is 13 percent for women and 3 percent for men in 1996 (UN, 2000).

Moreover, Akin's (2002) study on women's choice of participation and employment status using 1999 the Household Labour Survey in Turkey with the characteristics of women in Bursa reveals that, about 13 percent of women are working as part-time workers. On the other hand, only 8 percent of women are working as full-time workers. Also, she found that women in rural area tend to have higher rates of part-time participation (50%) compared to women in urban area (9%) (Akin, 2002, p.8).

In addition, the role played by part-time work in women's labour market participation in OECD countries, as investigated by Bolle (2001; 231), shows that there is no apparent relationship between them. For example, in some of the former communist countries (Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic), the rate of female participation is very high, but the part-time work is very low. This could be a reflection of the employment structure under the former communist system and of the slow development of the service sector. In the Netherlands there is consistency between part-time work and the women's labour force participation rate where both of them are very high (higher than the OECD average). On the other hand, Finland is a special case where there is a high rate of female labour force participation and a very low incidence of part-time work. In other OECD countries, the relationship between them seems to be more apparent; higher rates of female labour force participation are generally associated with a high level of part-time work. Similarly, Ozturk (2003) shows in her study that women would have participated more into the labour market if there had been more part-time jobs in Turkey.

In the case of Turkey, both the female participation rates and the proportion of part-time work are low (nearly 26 percent and 9.0 percent respectively in 2000). In fact, this low female participation rate is not surprising for Turkey. During the last 50 years Turkey has been experiencing a huge transformation from an agricultural economy to an industrial one. This has been accomplished with fast urbanization and has affected the composition of the labour force. In addition, there have been social changes, such as increasing educational attainments and opportunities and sectoral changes, as a result of moving from the agricultural sector to the services or the industrial sector. In Turkey, migration from rural to urban areas have negatively affected the female participation rate more than males because, while women have traditionally been a source of employment in agriculture as unpaid family workers, they cannot participate in the urban labour force after the migration.

The low rate of part-time work is not surprising in Turkey as well because the legal environment was not suitable for part-time employment. Comparative study of labour market regulation in OECD countries reveal that the Turkish labour law was very stringent. Among the OECD countries, Turkey's labour law was found to be the most rigid with a 3.8 degree of rigidity (TISK, 2000; 91). Therefore, firm's strategies are constrained by a lack of labour flexibility and Turkish employers can only enjoy an intermediate degree of flexibility by using fixed-term contracts. This was also confirmed by continuous calls by employers for changes to labour law regulations (TISK, 2001).

The World Bank report (1993) in the Turkish study also suggests that the government needs to encourage or mandate employers to supply more flexible time arrangements, by changing labour regulations to allow part-time and flexible time employment to increase women's participation in the labour market.

Moreover, there did not exist a special regulation for part-time work practices in the Turkish labour law until the new labour law was implemented in July 2003. However, the Article 61 of the previous Labour Law, which involved setting maximum hours of working time and letting parties make a contract to work lesser hours than this limit, provided the basis for part-time labour practices in our country (Genel Istihdam Komisyonu, 1982). This new part-time workers regulation has introduced some rights for part-timers. The law ensures that part-timers are not treated less favourably than comparable full-timers in their terms and conditions, unless it is objectively justified (TISK,2003).

Table2. Proportion of Women in Part-time Employment in OECD Countries^a

Country	1983	1990	1997	2000
Australia ^{b,c}	57.6	70.8	68.0	68.3
Austria	-	-	86.3	88.1
Belgium	78.8	79.9	82.6	79.0
Canada	-	70.1	70.0	69.3
Czech Republic	-	-	69.1	72.5
Denmark	81.3	71.5	64.3	69.8
Finland	71.7	67.2	63.4	63.8
France	81.0	79.8	78.8	80.1
Germany	-	89.7	85.1	84.5
Greece	59.4	61.1	63.0	65.5
Hungary	-	-	71.3	71.4
Iceland ^d	-	81.6	75.8	77.0
Ireland	71.6	71.8	72.7	76.0
Italy	67.4	70.8	71.0	70.5
Japan ^{b,c}	69.5	70.5	67.0	69.7
Luxemburg	88.3	86.5	89.0	90.4
Mexico	-	-	63.8	65.1
Netherlands	79.6	70.4	77.6	76.2
New Zealand	-	77.1	74.1	72.9
Norway	-	82.7	80.1	77.0
Poland ^b	-	-	61.1	61.7
Portugal	-	74.0	72.6	71.7
Spain	-	79.5	74.8	78.6
Sweden	-	81.1	76.3	72.9
Switzerland ^{c,d}	-	82.4	83.4	80.6
Turkey	-	62.5	58.2	55.1
United Kingdom	89.3	85.1	80.4	79.9
United States ^f	68.0	68.2	68.4	68.0
European Union ^g	-	80.9	79.1	79.0
Total OECD ^g	-	73.4	71.1	71.6

4. Arguments For and Against Part-time Work

a) Part-time employment refers to persons who usually work less than 30 hours per week in their main job.

b) Data are based on actual hours worked.

c) Part-time employment based on hours worked at all jobs.

d) Data 1990 refer to 1991.

e) Less than 35 hours per week.

f) Data are for wage and salary workers only.

g) For above countries only. Nil or negligible.

Sources: OECD, 1997, Employment Outlook, Table F. p.178, for 1983. OECD, 2002, Employment Outlook, Table E. p.319, for 1990, 1997 and 2000.

As is well known, conventionally, employers use part-time workers to increase staffing levels during peak business hours or to solve specific scheduling problems. This also shows why part-time work is used more intensively in areas such as hotels, catering, retail trade and personnel services. In these areas employers have to adapt more frequently to regular and periodic peaks of demand or to opening hours that are too long for the demand for labour to be met entirely by full time workers working a single shift (Kutal, 1991; Ruivo, Gonzalez and Varejao, 1998).

Delsen (1993) and Tarcan (2000) imply that part-time workers offer many advantages to employers, including increased productivity and intensity of work, a closer relation between paid time and work time, the opportunity to cover unsociable hours and short shifts as well as cost advantages from reduced basic pay and premium. Part-time employment provides many benefits for entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, part-time work is seen as offering a solution to rising unemployment for policy-makers. The growth of part-time work might lower the number of jobless or at least, the number of people registered as unemployed. For instance, in the Netherlands, part-time employment was stimulated to solve the rising unemployment problem during the early 1990s. Recently, in the Netherlands, the unemployment rate is very low (in 1998, 4.0 percent) and considerably lower than the European average (in 1998, 10 percent) and also part-time work is very widespread (see Table 1 and 2) (TISK, 2000).

Likewise, Plantenga (1995; 289) reports, "the large number of part-timers in the Netherlands has also aroused international attention. The German media has focused admiringly on the Netherlands's high part-time scores. The direct cause of this interest is primarily the growth of unemployment in Germany, which has forced policy-makers to search for alternative instruments to combat it. In an action plan to generate more growth and employment, part-time work is perceived as one of the most important instruments in reducing unemployment".

From the worker's point of view, part-time employment can accomplish two main functions: firstly it can be a bridge between employment and inactivity, and secondly it helps to reconcile paid work and unpaid housework and caring work which is considered women's responsibility in almost every country.

Another advantage to part-time employment, mentioned by Bolle (2001; 224), is that it makes it easy for young persons to enter into the labour market, and allows older workers to withdraw from wage employment. It also makes it easier to reconcile family responsibilities with employment, with the added virtue of providing a link to working life and then avoiding total interrupt -as in the case of parental leave- which can cause problems for upgrading skills.

However, part-time work also has its drawbacks. In general, part-time work is seen as an appropriate option for women and in like manner it is overwhelmingly women's work in most countries (see Table 2). For example, in Britain, a majority of women still leave the labour market when they have children and return to paid work, widely part-time after several years of absence due to the lack of available childcare facilities and

they experience downward mobility. This downward mobility is responsible for significant occupational segregation between men and women (Beechey and Perkins, 1987). Over the course of their lives, women are usually constrained by domestic and childcare responsibilities while men are securing and improving their occupational positions, by acquiring professional qualifications and by moving into managerial and supervisory positions. Therefore, women and men show a huge disparity in lifetime occupational status with married men moving up into managerial positions while married women move down into part-time personnel sector jobs.

Likewise Plantenga (1995), in her study of part-time work in the Netherlands, argues that part-time work is dominated by women and most part-time jobs are in the lower grade and lower paid occupations in service sector industries. As is noted before, part-time work appears to imply a certain addition of horizontal and vertical job segregation between males and females. Poorer legal status and lower level of part-time jobs also have consequences on wages. Statistical studies on part-time employment show that part-timers are on average paid lower hourly wages than full-timers (ILO, 1992; Hakim 1997; Loutfi, 2001)

It is important to note that, although part-time work provides an option for women who do not want to work full-time due to the family responsibilities, it also limits their available labour market opportunities and hampers them in terms of occupational status and pay. It has been shown by (Watts and Rich, 1992; Kocak, 1999) that women's disproportionate representation in part-time employment is responsible for the occupational segregation and that part-time employment has been a barrier to women's full integration into the labour market.

Moreover, part-timers are also at a disadvantage of being excluded from supplementary payments such as bonuses, holiday and pay sickness, training allowances, seniority payments etc. To summarize, part-time workers are frequently at disadvantages, individually or as a group, concerning direct or indirect wages, participation in trade union, social security benefits and training. In addition to these disadvantages is a type of hidden discrimination that influences advancement and promotion prospects (ILO, 1992).

5. Concluding Remarks

It has been seen that, in most OECD countries part-time work has been expanding, although there are large differences between countries in the level of part-time work and in its rate of rise. Also, part-time work is still female-dominated. In every country women's shares of part-time work widely exceed men's shares of part-time work.

In Turkey, women's part-time employment and the female labour force participation rate remain at relatively low levels. However, the low levels of female labour force participation show that there is still scope for women to enter the labour market. In this situation part-time work would be seen as an instrument to encourage women to enter the labour market in Turkey.

With this in mind, part-time work has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, part-time employment is often viewed as a precarious form of employment,

which carries penalties -low pay, little job security, inadequate legal protection, lack of social benefits and poor career expectations. Employers often think that part-time workers constitute the marginal labour force and are employed to meet temporary overload while minimizing cost by avoiding overtime salaries for full-timers. Further, as is mentioned in Section 3, part-time work is overwhelmingly women's work. Hence, this type of work is seen as responsible for occupational segregation and unequal treatment of female workers.

On the other hand, part-time employment is seen as a flexible, effective and relatively well-protected way of reconciling paid and unpaid work, training and leisure. It is especially found to be favourable to individuals with family responsibilities, workers approaching retirement and other special groups. Part-time employment can raise the continuity of women in the labour force and strengthen their position in the labour market. Additionally, from the employer's point of view, it gives greater flexibility to adjusting working hours to business needs while reaching higher productivity.

As is noted in Section 3, it has recently been established that part-time and full-time workers must be treated equally. However, this new part-time legislation is not sufficient for comprising enough equal rights for part-timers and full timers. The government needs to produce a range of useful information on compliance and best practice for employers and part-timers. The convention concerning part-time work (No.175) was signed by the International Labour Conference in 1994, and it came to effect on 28 February 1998 by a few sufficient ratification procedures. This Convention establishes minimum standards for part-time employment based on the two principles of proportionality and non-discrimination (see for detail Appendix 1). We suggest that the Turkish government could ratify the Convention No.175 and introduce needed regulations to make these standards come into effect for part-timers in the labour market. With this ratification, decent minimum standards for part-timers and a flexible and competitive workforce could be ensured in Turkey as well.

Consequently, although part-time work has some drawbacks, if it is freely chosen by workers and protected by law, it seems to be a good option for people who do not want to work full-time due to family responsibilities, civic and social activities and leisure. In this regard, part-time employment seems worth encouraging.

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Appendix 1. Selection from the Convention concerning part-time work (No. 175)

Article 4

Measures shall be taken to ensure that part-time workers receive the same protection as that accorded to comparable full-time workers in respect of:

- a- the right to organize, the right to bargain collectively and the right to act as workers' representatives;
- b- occupational safety and health
- c- discrimination in employment and occupation

Article 5

Measures appropriate to national law and practice shall be taken to ensure that part-time workers do not, solely because they work part-time, receive a basic wage which, calculated proportionately on a hourly, performance-related, or piece-rate basis, is lower than the basic wage of comparable full-time workers, calculated according to the same method.

Article 6

Statutory social security schemes which, are based on occupational activity shall be adapted so that part-time workers enjoy conditions equivalent to those of comparable full-time workers; these conditions may be determined in proportion to hours of work, contributions or earnings, or through other methods consistent with national law and practice.

Article 7

Measures shall be taken to ensure that part-time workers receive conditions equivalent to those of comparable full-time workers in the fields of:

- a- maternity protection;
- b- termination of employment;
- c- paid annual leave and paid public holidays; and
- d- sick leave

it being understood that pecuniary entitlements may be determined in proportion to hours of work or earnings.

Source: Bolle, 2001, p. 225