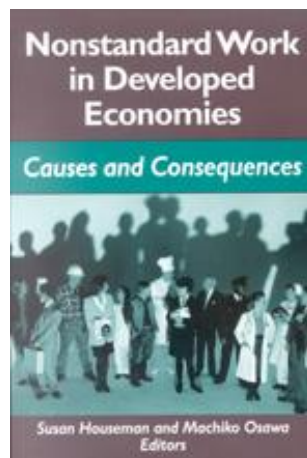

Upjohn Institute Press

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Chapter 9 (pp. 307-350) in:
Nonstandard Work in Developed Economies: Causes and Consequences
Susan Houseman, and Machiko Osawa, eds.
Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2003
DOI: 10.17848/9781417505326.ch9

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Work Arrangements among Women in the United States

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The past couple of decades have seen considerable growth in nonstandard employment in industrialized nations across the world. Although levels of and growth in part-time, temporary, on-call, and contract work differ considerably from nation to nation, one feature of these work arrangements appears to be universal among nations: they tend to be dominated by women. For some, the growth in nonstandard work is a welcome trend, offering certain groups of women, particularly married women, a compromise for balancing work with family or other responsibilities (e.g., Schwartz 1989; Blossfeld 1997; Hakim 1995, 1997). Some workers may desire or need to engage in paid employment, but their priorities in caring for their families, pursuing their education, or easing into retirement make nonstandard work arrangements attractive for their flexibility or reduced hours. Nonstandard jobs may pay less, but many women make their decisions in the context of a household division of labor in which the earnings of a male breadwinner enable women to forgo some compensation in exchange for work conditions and schedules that accommodate their preferences (e.g., Hakim 1995, 1997).

For others, women's overrepresentation in nonstandard work arrangements is worrisome in view of the lower pay and benefits of nonstandard work that place women in precarious economic positions, many of them involuntarily (e.g., Beechey and Perkins 1987; Appelbaum 1992; Smith 1993; Rubery 1998; Spalter-Roth and Hartmann 1998). Nonstandard work arrangements have grown as employers have sought to cut costs and increase flexibility over the past couple of decades in an increasingly competitive economy (Pfeffer and Baron 1988; Rubin 1995). Women may be particularly vulnerable to recent trends in the workplace, given the tendency for workplace transitions

to occur along and perpetuate preexisting gender divisions. Employers construct jobs and develop work and skill expectations according to the gender of the expected incumbent (e.g., Acker 1990; Reskin and Roos 1990; Steinberg 1990). Nonstandard work may be no different as employers create nonstandard jobs with women in mind, drawing on ideological assumptions about women as wives and mothers with a male income on which to depend and a family that assumes priority over paid work, regardless of whether such assumptions are true (Beechey and Perkins 1987; Colclough and Tolbert 1992; J. Smith 1984; Smith and Gottfried 1998; Spalter-Roth and Hartmann 1998). For example, Beechey and Perkins (1987, p. 76) reported that in restructuring existing jobs to achieve greater flexibility, employers put workers on part-time schedules in typically female jobs, but used overtime hours or other arrangements that maintained full-time schedules for workers in typically male jobs. In this view, women are overrepresented in nonstandard work arrangements, not because they prefer them, but because they are more vulnerable than men to employers' efforts to shift away from permanent, full-time employment.

Understanding women's participation in nonstandard work requires a close examination of the characteristics and work preferences of women in regular and nonstandard work and their patterns of nonstandard employment. This chapter provides a detailed overview of American women in full-time, part-time, temporary, contract, and on-call jobs. The first section examines the demographic, family, and job characteristics of women in different work arrangements. The second section studies women's reasons for working in part-time and other nonstandard jobs and their preferences for regular full-time work. The third section focuses on women's transitions across and stability within different work arrangements, and how family characteristics and life events of marriage, divorce, and childbirth affect their employment transitions and stability.

To examine women's work arrangements, I use data from two different sources. Data from the February 1997 Current Population Survey (CPS) and its supplement on contingent work provide an overview of the demographics, family characteristics, and work preferences of a nationally representative sample of women in different work arrangements. To examine women's patterns of nonstandard employment over time, I use data from the 1994, 1996, and 1998 rounds of the National

Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). NLSY data are well suited to examining women's work patterns because they provide data for one of the age groups of women most likely to use nonstandard work arrangements in conjunction with family responsibilities. Women in the NLSY were between the ages of 29 and 36 in 1994 and were 33 to 40 years old by the final round included in this analysis, 1998. Ideally, a study of the relationship between nonstandard work and family roles would include younger women as well, since many women begin bearing children in their 20s or earlier; however, because the NLSY did not ask for detailed information about women's work arrangements until 1994, such data are not available.

This chapter discusses five mutually exclusive types of work arrangements: temporary, on-call, contract, regular part-time, and regular full-time employment.¹ The definitions and measurements of work arrangements are as follows:

Temporary Workers. Temporary workers provide services for employers for a limited period of time or to complete a particular project. They may work either part- or full-time hours. Temporary workers include agency temps (workers who are paid by a temporary help agency, but perform services for the client to which they are assigned) and direct-hire temps (workers whose jobs are temporary for economic reasons). Slightly more than one percent (1.3 percent) of American women worked as agency temps and 2.7 percent worked as direct-hire temps in 1997. Women are overrepresented in temporary work; they are 46.3 percent of all workers, but 56 percent of agency temps and 52 percent of direct-hire temps.

On-Call Workers. On-call workers work on an as-needed basis, reporting to work when called upon by their employers. The NLSY offers no measure of on-call work. I used the CPS to identify on-call workers as those who work only when called.² On-call workers may work part- or full-time. Almost one percent (0.9 percent) of American women work on an on-call basis, and 50.5 percent of all on-call workers are women.

Contract Workers. I identified contract workers in the CPS as those who work for a company that contracts their services out to other organizations. Contract workers may work for more than one customer and

may work at the customer's worksite or at a different location. In the NLSY, contract workers are those who self-identified as consultants, contractors, or employees of contractors. Contract workers may work either part- or full-time hours. Contract workers are disproportionately male; only 30.4 percent are women. Just 0.9 percent of all women worked in contract jobs in 1997.

Regular Part-Time Workers. Regular part-time workers are employed in standard work arrangements, but work fewer than 35 hours per week. More than one out of every five American women (22.5 percent) works in a regular part-time job.³ Part-time work is the most female-dominated of all work arrangements, with women constituting almost two-thirds of all regular part-time workers.

Regular Full-Time Workers. Regular full-time workers are regular employees who work more than 35 hours per week. Most employed American women work in regular full-time jobs (63.1 percent), although women are slightly underrepresented in full-time work; women are 43.7 percent of full-time workers.

WHO WORKS IN NONSTANDARD JOBS?

The demographic and family characteristics of female workers differ considerably, not only between nonstandard workers and full-time workers, but across different types of nonstandard work arrangements as well. As the following section shows, women's age, education, race, and family roles all contribute to the sorting of women into different types of work arrangements. Table 9.1 presents the distributions of full-time and nonstandard workers by age, education, race, and family type; and Table 9.2 presents logistic regressions of the effects of workers' characteristics on working in each type of nonstandard work arrangement.

Part-Time Workers

Women in part-time work are disproportionately young, with nearly one in four under the age of 24. They are also slightly more

Table 9.1 U.S. Women's Demographic and Family Characteristics by Work Arrangement (%)

Characteristic	Full-time	Part-time	Agency temps	Direct-hire temps	On-call	Contract	All
Age							
18–24	9.9	24.0	18.4	35.6	14.5	8.3	13.4
25–44	57.7	48.9	55.0	43.7	51.8	69.5	54.9
45–54	23.4	17.3	18.4	13.7	17.8	14.4	22.1
55+	9.0	9.8	8.2	7.0	15.8	7.7	9.7
Education							
Less than high school	7.3	11.4	9.4	9.0	7.9	8.4	8.3
High school	33.8	34.5	34.9	21.0	24.1	34.0	33.4
Some college	30.2	35.9	37.9	37.9	30.6	25.8	31.7
Bachelor's degree	19.8	13.5	15.2	20.3	31.4	23.1	18.5
Higher than bachelor's degree	8.9	4.7	2.6	11.8	6.0	8.8	8.0
Race/ethnicity							
Non-Hispanic white	73.3	79.5	65.8	72.3	76.7	75.2	75.6
Non-Hispanic black	13.9	9.4	20.3	9.3	11.8	10.5	12.0
Hispanic	8.6	7.9	10.5	10.8	7.7	8.7	8.3
Asian	3.5	2.7	3.4	6.4	3.1	4.2	3.4
Other groups	0.7	0.5	0.0	1.2	0.6	1.3	0.6

(continued)

Table 9.1 (continued)

Characteristic	Full-time	Part-time	Agency temps	Direct-hire temps	On-call	Contract	All
Family type							
Single—no children	31.4	32.2	38.1	50.8	26.5	30.3	31.0
Single—children under 5 ^a	4.4	4.9	6.6	4.4	5.0	6.1	4.4
Single—children, aged 5–18 ^b	7.7	5.8	7.5	3.4	6.4	5.9	6.9
Married—no children	26.8	21.1	27.7	15.9	24.0	24.3	25.8
Married—children under 5 ^a	12.1	16.2	8.5	9.8	16.5	14.8	13.5
Married—children, aged 5–18 ^b	17.7	19.7	11.7	15.7	21.7	18.6	18.4

^a Respondent has children in the household, and at least one is younger than age 5.

^b Respondent has children in the household, but none is younger than age 5.

SOURCE: 1997 Current Population Survey, weighted.

Table 9.2 Logistic Regression of Likelihood of Nonstandard Work Relative to Regular, Full-Time Work for U.S. Women

Characteristic	Part-time	Agency temps	Direct-hire temps	On-call	Contract
Age					
18–24	1.120**	0.412*	1.530**	0.801**	–0.416
25–44 (reference group)					
45–54	0.019	–0.324	–0.250	0.096	–0.665**
55+	0.462**	–0.277	0.110	1.136**	–0.361
Education					
Less than high school	0.468**	0.189	0.597**	0.341	0.181
High school (reference group)					
Some college	0.122**	0.178	0.655**	0.395*	–0.186
Bachelor's degree	–0.359**	–0.309	0.506**	0.928**	0.054
Higher than bachelor's degree	–0.543**	–1.137**	1.082**	0.034	–0.042
Race/ethnicity					
White (reference group)					
Black	–0.533**	0.420**	–0.387**	–0.186	–0.326
Hispanic	–0.461**	0.179	0.160	–0.170	–0.110
Other groups	–0.337**	–0.017	0.634**	–0.225	0.214
Family type					
Single–no children (reference group)					
Single–children under 5 ^a	0.110	–0.100	–0.488*	0.556	0.327
Single–children, aged 5–18 ^b	0.160*	–0.303	–0.683**	0.418	–0.325
Married–no children	–0.013	0.041	–0.628**	0.083	–0.034
Married–children under 5 ^a	0.651**	–0.568*	–0.471**	0.770**	0.029
Married–children, aged 5–18 ^b	0.527**	–0.518*	–0.051	0.762**	–0.041

* = $p < 0.05$, two-tail test; ** = $p < 0.01$, two-tail test.

^a Respondent has children in the household, and at least one is younger than age 5.

^b Respondent has children in the household, but none is younger than age 5.

SOURCE: 1997 Current Population Survey, weighted.

likely than full-time workers to be older than 55. Part-time workers are clustered at the lower end of the educational distribution, with higher percentages of part-time than full-time workers lacking a high school education or having started, but not completed, a college education. These differences exist, in part, because a considerable proportion of young women in part-time work are enrolled in school while they work. Sixty percent of all female part-time workers between the ages of 18 and 24 were currently enrolled in either high school or college (results not shown). Four out of five women in part-time work are white, with blacks, Hispanics, and other groups underrepresented in part-time jobs. Family characteristics are somewhat important for understanding women's use of part-time work: married women with children are significantly more likely to work part-time than full-time. However, the differences are not large: 36 percent of women in part-time jobs are married mothers, compared with 30 percent of women in full-time jobs.

Temporary Workers

Agency temps and direct-hire temporary workers are disproportionately young; agency temps are twice as likely and direct-hire temps are four times as likely as full-time workers to be between the ages of 18 and 24. Women who work as agency temps are fairly similar to regular, full-time workers in their educational characteristics, although they are significantly less likely to hold advanced degrees. In contrast, direct-hire temps, though more likely than regular, full-time workers to lack a high school diploma, are more likely to have at least some college education, a four-year college degree, or an advanced degree. One in five agency temps is black, considerably higher than the percentage of black women in the labor force overall (12 percent). However, a smaller percentage of direct-hire temps are black—just 9.3 percent. The family characteristics of temporary and regular, full-time workers are markedly different. Married women with children are significantly less likely to work in temporary jobs than regular full-time jobs. Instead, temporary workers are more likely than workers in any other work arrangement to be single and childless; fewer than one-third of women in regular, full-time jobs were single and childless, but 38 per-

cent of agency temps and half of all direct-hire temporaries were single with no children.

On-Call Workers

On-call workers are more likely to be either young (under 25) or older than 55 compared with their full-time counterparts. Nearly one-third (31.6 percent) held bachelor's degrees; a much higher proportion than women in any other type of work arrangement. Like part-time work, being married with children significantly increases women's likelihood of working in an on-call rather than regular, full-time position, with married mothers constituting 38 percent of female on-call workers.

Contract Workers

The characteristics of women in contract jobs differ very little from those in regular, full-time jobs. A larger proportion were between the prime working ages of 25 and 44, but in terms of education, race, and family characteristics, contract workers were very similar to their full-time counterparts.

OCCUPATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NONSTANDARD WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Previous studies have indicated that nonstandard work arrangements tend to be clustered in low-skill occupations, offer fewer advancement opportunities, and are generally inferior in quality relative to regular, full-time jobs (e.g., Beechey and Perkins 1987; Callaghan and Hartmann 1991; Tilly 1996; Kalleberg et al. 1997; McAllister 1998). To compare the types of work performed in different arrangements, the following section examines the occupational characteristics, the skills of the workers, and the working hours of each work arrangement.⁴ In general, nonstandard work arrangements are relatively scarce in managerial occupations and more plentiful in sales and service occupations, and women in nonstandard jobs typically work in occupations that require fewer skills and more repetitive, routinized

tasks than the occupations held by women in regular full-time positions (see Table 9.3).

Occupations

Occupations vary considerably in the proportions of workers employed on nonstandard bases. Most managerial positions are organized as regular full-time positions, with just 15 percent of female managers in nonstandard work arrangements. In contrast, employers are most likely to organize work on a nonstandard basis in service and sales occupations; full-time workers are slightly less than half of the entire female labor force in service occupations, and are just 60 percent of the female sales labor force. Sales and service occupations organize a disproportionately high percentage of positions on part-time schedules; almost 38 percent of sales positions and 43 percent of service positions are regular part-time jobs. Although very few workers in any occupational group work as temporaries, on-call, or contract workers, employers do differ in their use of these work arrangements across occupations. For example, agency and direct-hire temps are overrepresented in administrative support occupations. However, employers do not appear to use agency and direct-hire temporaries interchangeably; agency temps are overrepresented in production and labor occupations, while direct-hire temps are overrepresented in professional occupations. The higher educational levels of direct-hire temps relative to agency temps reported in Tables 9.1 and 9.2 apparently facilitate the ability of direct-hire temps to obtain employment in more highly skilled occupations. Finally, female on-call workers are overrepresented in professional occupations as well as in service occupations, while female contract workers are relatively rare in sales and administrative support jobs, but not in service jobs, where their representation is twice as high as their representation in the labor force as a whole.

Skills and Tasks

In general, women in regular, full-time jobs have the greatest opportunities to exercise complex and challenging skills and to avoid repetitive and routinized work. Part-time workers and temporary agency employees work in occupations that require, on average, fewer

Table 9.3 Occupational and Skill Characteristics of Work Arrangements, U.S. Women

	Full-time	Part-time	Agency temps	Direct-hire temps	On-call	Contract
Occupations (%)						
Managerial	85.3	11.1	0.9	1.8	0.1	0.9
Professional	72.8	19.2	0.3	4.3	2.2	1.2
Technical	70.4	24.3	1.4	2.0	0.4	1.5
Sales	59.9	37.6	0.2	1.6	0.4	0.2
Administrative support	71.6	21.2	2.7	3.6	0.5	0.4
Service	49.5	43.0	0.8	3.1	1.6	2.0
Production/labor	74.8	18.2	2.8	2.3	1.0	1.0
All ^a	69.1	24.6	1.4	3.0	1.0	1.0
Skill complexity ^b						
Skill with people	2.46 (1.68)	2.04* (1.39)	1.50* (1.02)	2.76* (1.94)	2.90* (2.19)	2.06* (1.43)
Skill with data	3.15 (1.31)	2.64* (1.22)	2.44* (1.24)	2.99 (1.36)	2.71* (1.41)	2.80* (1.70)
Skill with things	2.14 (1.77)	2.24* (1.85)	2.75* (1.71)	1.76 (1.76)	1.61* (1.71)	2.27 (1.65)
Repetitive work	17.52 (26.40)	22.71* (28.19)	24.84* (30.80)	16.22 (24.82)	15.28 (27.38)	17.93 (27.32)
Routinized work	33.92 (36.01)	47.51* (38.52)	50.81* (36.48)	38.27 (37.29)	37.00 (40.22)	38.12 (35.73)

(continued)

Table 9.3 (continued)

	Full-time	Part-time	Agency temps	Direct-hire temps	On-call	Contract
Specific vocational preparation	5.44 (1.42)	4.74* (1.51)	4.76* (1.28)	5.25 (1.62)	5.01* (1.46)	5.29 (1.65)
Percent who work part-time hours	0.0	100.0	30.8	62.0	86.6	37.6

NOTE: Standard deviations are in parentheses. The range for each variable is indicated in note 4.

*Difference in mean from regular, full-time workers is significant at $p < 0.05$.

^a The values in this row differ slightly from those reported in the text on pp. 309–310 for the overall distribution of women across work arrangements because the self-employed and independent contractors are omitted from the sample.

^b Higher values reflect greater skill complexity.

SOURCE: 1997 Current Population Survey, weighted.

skills in working with people or data and less vocational preparation for the work. Their occupations do require greater complexity in working with things (see note 4), but this apparently does not protect them from performing more repetitive and routinized work than the average full-time female worker. Direct-hire temporaries work in occupations that require more complex skills with people, on average, than full-time workers; however, they perform less complex skills with data or things, and their work is more routinized and requires less training to perform. On-call workers also perform work requiring greater people skills but fewer data or machinery skills and less training than the work of women in regular full-time jobs. Contract workers differ very little from regular full-time workers in the tasks they perform, although their work does require fewer people or data skills on average. Thus, while the skill complexity of work that nonstandard workers perform tends to be lower than that of the average regular full-time worker, there is variation in skill complexity across work arrangements. Moreover, as the standard deviations for the means of skill complexity show, there is considerable variation within each type of work arrangement as well. On-call workers, for example, show substantial variation in their opportunities to exercise people skills (std. dev. = 2.19, see Table 9.3), reflecting the diversity in the types of work they perform, from professional jobs such as substitute teachers and on-call nurses to service jobs, working as cooks or household cleaners.

Work Hours

By definition, regular full-time workers work full-time hours and part-time workers work fewer than 35 hours per week. However, other types of nonstandard workers can work full- or part-time hours. The last row of Table 9.3 presents the percentage of workers in each work arrangement who work part-time. Most agency temps and contract workers work full-time hours, with 30 percent of agency temps and nearly 38 percent of contract workers usually working fewer than 35 hours per week. In contrast, most direct-hire temps and on-call workers work part-time. More than three out of five direct-hire temps and roughly 87 percent of on-call workers work fewer than 35 hours per week.

WORKERS' REASONS AND PREFERENCES FOR NONSTANDARD WORK

Much debate about nonstandard work centers around the question of whether workers accept nonstandard jobs voluntarily or involuntarily. The availability and growth of nonstandard employment may be viewed as a positive trend in the American economy if nonstandard work arrangements allow women greater options for successfully balancing work and family needs and if women welcome these arrangements. Alternatively, nonstandard work may be more reflective of the needs of employers for low labor costs and greater employment flexibility, and some workers may pay the costs of employment flexibility and cost-cutting measures in terms of fewer options for permanent, full-time work and greater involuntary employment in nonstandard jobs. This section examines women's preferences for regular full-time employment, followed by their reasons for accepting nonstandard jobs.

Data from the 1997 CPS indicate that preferences for regular employment differ by work arrangement (see Table 9.4). Most women in temporary, on-call, or contract arrangements would prefer regular employment. Temporary workers, in particular, would prefer regular or permanent employment—two-thirds of agency temps and nearly three-quarters of direct-hire temps responded that they would prefer permanent employment. Nearly 60 percent of on-call workers and two-thirds of contract workers would have preferred regular employment. Part-time workers differed from workers in other nonstandard arrangements; most did not report a preference for full-time work. Nevertheless, nearly one in four would have preferred to work full-time.

Because women's preferences for regular jobs may depend on their marital and parental status, the lower panel of Table 9.4 presents workers' preferences for regular employment by family type. The data indicate only slight deviations from overall patterns by family type, with married women slightly less likely to report a preference for regular employment than single women. Significance tests (not shown) indicated that the effect of family type on workers' preferences was significant only for part-time workers ($\chi^2 = 237.61$ with 3 degrees of freedom, significant at $p < 0.01$) and for direct-hire temporaries ($\chi^2 = 49.39$ with 3 degrees of freedom, significant at $p < 0.01$). Among part-

Table 9.4 Worker Preferences by Nonstandard Work Arrangement and Family Type, U.S. Women

	Part-time	Agency temps	Direct- hire temps	On-call	Contract
Percent who would prefer regular work					
All workers	23.8	65.9	74.3	57.2	66.2
By family type					
Single—no children	21.5	70.5	77.8	59.6	74.1
Single—children	53.2	63.1	77.5	70.0	— ^a
Married—no children	20.7	63.9	71.1	53.5	62.1
Married—children	21.7	57.0	72.4	54.1	63.0

^a Insufficient sample size.

SOURCE: 1997 Current Population Survey, weighted.

time workers, single mothers were particularly likely to want full-time hours, while the preferences of single, childless women, and married women for full-time work hovered around 21 percent. Among direct-hire temporaries, a larger proportion of single women than married women (regardless of parental status) wanted permanent employment.

In sum, women's family responsibilities do not appear to be steering women toward a preference for nonstandard work. Instead, many of the women who work in most types of nonstandard work arrangements preferred regular employment. The notable exception is part-time work, where most women in every family type except single-mother households do not wish to work full-time hours. Single mothers were more likely than married mothers in every arrangement to want regular full-time work, suggesting that nonstandard work arrangements are particularly unlikely to meet the needs of women who may alone be providing economically for their families.

Given the considerable proportion of women in each type of work arrangement who would prefer regular employment, it is important to examine why women are working in them. What compels women to find nonstandard work arrangements preferable to regular, full-time jobs, and why do women who do not want nonstandard work accept such jobs? Previous research categorizes workers' reasons into three

mutually exclusive categories: involuntary (i.e., related to economic conditions), voluntary (noneconomic reasons for nonstandard work), and family-related reasons. Researchers are cautious about classifying family responsibilities as either voluntary or involuntary because the types of jobs that are available, access to and affordability of child care, and the family policies that are in place all serve to shape women's choices about labor force participation and attachment (see O'Reilly and Fagan 1998 for a comprehensive discussion).

Because of this, it is unclear whether nonstandard employment for family reasons reflects voluntary or constrained choices. Prior findings indicate that married women in dual-earner households frequently cited family reasons for nonstandard, particularly part-time, employment, while single, childless women typically cited voluntary reasons for part-time work, and involuntary reasons for temporary and on-call employment (Kalleberg et al. 1997, p. 59). However, each of these three categories of reasons—involuntary, voluntary, and family—combines a number of potentially different reasons. For example, the category of family reasons includes “problems with child care,” which suggests an involuntary choice, as well as the more general response, “other family or personal obligations,” which can include women with a wide array of views and choices about combining work and family. I present the detailed reasons that workers most commonly provided for their nonstandard employment, distinguishing workers by whether they reported a preference for regular employment, given that these two groups are likely to differ in their reasons for nonstandard employment.

Among workers who would not have preferred a regular job, the desire for flexible or short-term employment was the most common reason for working in a temporary agency, on-call, and contract jobs, and it was the second most common reason cited by direct-hire temporaries (see second column, Table 9.5). Part-time workers typically cited family or personal obligations. Most of the responses for those who would not prefer regular employment, such as short-term or flexible employment or currently obtaining training or schooling, imply voluntary reasons for nonstandard work; however, a substantial minority of women reported involuntary reasons for their nonstandard employment, even though they did not respond that they would have preferred a regular job. Fourteen percent of temporary workers who did not prefer permanent jobs said a temporary job was the only type of work they

could find, and 12 percent of contract workers said their job was seasonal. Five percent of part-time workers said they worked part-time because of problems with child care (not shown).

Among workers who would have preferred regular employment, the most commonly cited reasons pertained to the lack of alternative job opportunities. More than two-fifths of temporary agency workers reported that temporary work was the only type of job they could find, and another one-fifth took their job in hopes that it would turn into a regular position. Similarly, slightly more than 45 percent of on-call workers either reported that on-call work was the only type of work they could find or that they hoped the job would become regular. Among direct-hire temps, current enrollment in school was the most common reason cited, but 19 percent indicated that temporary work was the only work they could find, and another 8 percent took their job in hopes that it would become permanent. More than one-third of part-time workers worked part-time because they could not find another type of job, and more than one-quarter cited slack business conditions.

In sum, the majority of agency and direct-hire temporaries, contract, and on-call workers would have preferred regular employment, and cited involuntary reasons for working in the types of jobs they did. Most part-time workers preferred to work part- rather than full-time, and typically worked part-time hours to accommodate family or personal obligations or schooling. Nevertheless, 24 percent would have preferred regular full-time work, but worked part-time primarily because they were unable to find full-time work or because business conditions were slack. The evidence that women prefer nonstandard work because of their family roles is slight. Clearly, family roles steer some women toward nonstandard jobs, particularly part-time jobs, where almost 80 percent of married women prefer their work arrangement to regular full-time work. However, most women, regardless of their family roles, do not wish to work in temporary, on-call, or contract jobs, and those who do rarely cite family reasons for accepting their current work arrangement.

Table 9.5 Most Common Detailed Reasons for Holding Nonstandard Jobs, by Work Arrangement and Preferences for Regular Work, U.S. Women

	Would not prefer regular employment	Would prefer regular employment
Part-time	Family or personal obligations (42.6%) Currently in school or training (27.7%) Unspecified personal reasons (6.5%)	Only type of work respondent could find (35.2%) Slack business conditions (27.6%) Currently in school or training (9.2%)
Agency temps	Wants flexible or short-term employment (29.6%) Unspecified personal reasons (12.5%) Hopes job becomes permanent (13.6%)	Only type of work respondent could find (45.1%) Hopes job becomes permanent (21.4%) Wants flexible or short-term employment (9%)
Direct-hire temps	Currently in school (54.1%) Wants flexible or short-term employment (10.7%) Unspecified personal reasons (8%)	Currently in school (20.2%) Only type of work respondent could find (19.0%) Hopes job becomes permanent (8.2%)
Contract	Wants flexible or short-term employment (41.2%) Job is seasonal (11.9%)	Only type of work respondent could find (23.5%) Wants flexible or short-term employment (11.2%) Unspecified economic reasons (10.1%)
On-call	Wants flexible or short-term employment (35.2%) Currently in school or training (20.4%) Unspecified personal reasons (10.5%)	Only type of work respondent could find (37.6%) Unspecified personal reasons (12.3%) Hopes job becomes regular position (9.9%)

SOURCE: 1997 Current Population Survey, weighted.

WOMEN'S TRANSITIONS IN AND OUT OF NONSTANDARD EMPLOYMENT

To date, research on nonstandard work primarily uses data from the CPS or other cross-sectional surveys that provide snapshots of nonstandard employment at one point in time. However, because workers move in and out of nonstandard jobs at a higher rate than regular full-time jobs, the fraction of workers who experience nonstandard employment over a longer time period is greater than the fraction in nonstandard jobs at any single point in time. Moreover, cross-sectional data do not permit researchers to identify how long workers remain in nonstandard work arrangements, or what they do before entering or after leaving nonstandard jobs. Ideally, to develop estimates of how many workers use nonstandard work arrangements over the course of their work histories, researchers would use nationally representative data for the U.S. labor force that track workers' work arrangements over time. Although such data do not exist, the NLSY does offer longitudinal data for a nationally representative sample of individuals born between 1957 and 1965.

In 1994, the NLSY incorporated in their biennial questionnaire an item asking workers about the type of job they currently held. Based on this survey item, I have distinguished between regular full-time workers, regular part-time workers, temporary workers, contract workers, and other unspecified nonstandard workers. The category of temporary workers includes both agency temps and direct-hire temps because sample sizes were not large enough to retain separate categories. The definition of contract workers in the NLSY includes workers who self-identify as consultants, contractors, or employees of contractors; this category may not be directly comparable with the CPS definition of contract workers. The NLSY does not have a separate category for on-call workers; these workers are likely to be captured in the category of other nonstandard work.

A comparison of estimates of women's participation in nonstandard work based on cross-sectional and longitudinal data indicates some movement between regular full-time and nonstandard work arrangements, so that higher percentages of women show nonstandard employment over the course of four years than suggested by cross-sec-

tional estimates (see Table 9.6). Cross-sectional estimates of women's work arrangements from NLSY data are similar to estimates for women of the same age group in the CPS (results not shown), with approximately two-thirds of the female workforce in regular full-time jobs, about one-quarter in regular part-time jobs, and about 3 percent in temporary jobs in each survey year. Estimates of contract work are slightly higher in the NLSY (1.8 percent in the NLSY compared with 1.2 percent in the CPS among women aged 33–40), probably because of definitional differences in the two measures. The final column of Table 9.6 indicates the percentage of women in the NLSY who reported working in a particular arrangement in at least one of the three surveys. Thus, for example, although approximately 3 percent of women reported using temporary work in any one particular survey year, nearly 5 percent of all women who had worked at any time between 1994 and 1998 had worked in a temporary job.⁵ Higher percentages of women also work in contract and other nonstandard work arrangements over time than single point-in-time estimates capture. Finally, the percentages of women reporting regular full- and part-time employment over the course of four years are slightly higher than cross-sectional estimates, but the differences are much smaller than those for other work arrangements, reflecting the greater job stability of regular full-time and part-time jobs.

Table 9.6 Percentage of U.S. Women in Each Work Arrangement in 1994, 1996, and 1998, and at Any Time between 1994 and 1998

	1994	1996	1998	At any time between 1994 and 1998 ^a
Regular full-time	68.5	67.6	67.4	70.0
Regular part-time	23.4	24.2	25.4	31.2
Temporary	3.1	3.1	2.8	4.9
Contract	1.9	1.7	1.8	3.4
Other	3.0	3.2	2.5	5.1
All workers	3,254	3,509	3,554	3,788

^a Percentages in this column exceed 100 because workers could have held more than one work arrangement within the four-year period.

SOURCE: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, weighted.

By using longitudinal data, it is possible to identify how women combine work arrangements over time. Table 9.7 categorizes women by their employment patterns from 1994 to 1998. A majority of women worked at some point during this time period. Seventy-six percent were continuously employed, another 16 percent were employed intermittently, and just 8 percent did not work at all from 1994 to 1998. Of those who were continuously employed, about half worked in a regular full-time job throughout the entire period. Few women were continuously employed in a single type of nonstandard work the entire duration; fewer than 9 percent held regular part-time jobs, and fewer than 1 percent held temporary, contract, or other nonstandard jobs continuously from 1994 to 1998. More common than steady employment in a single type of nonstandard work was the practice of piecing together work arrangements; nearly one-third of continuously employed women shifted between full-time and nonstandard employment, and another 4 percent combined different types of nonstandard employment. These findings suggest considerable movement between work arrangements among this cohort of women.

Among the nearly 16 percent of women who were not in the labor force continuously between 1994 and 1998, most worked in nonstandard jobs at least part of the time they were employed. Just one-third moved between nonemployment and full-time work alone, while 44 percent moved between nonemployment and nonstandard jobs, and another 18 percent shifted between nonemployment, nonstandard work, and regular full-time jobs. The high rate of nonstandard employment among intermittently employed women may reflect women's use of nonstandard jobs to ease transitions in and out of the labor market as family or personal needs dictate, or it may reflect constrained economic opportunities for these women and their difficulties in finding permanent employment. Unfortunately, the NLSY does not include an item about workers' preferences for regular or nonstandard work that would permit me to adjudicate among these two arguments. In sum, the findings in Table 9.7 indicate that many workers use nonstandard work arrangements at some point in their work histories. Within the relatively short period from 1994 to 1998, almost half (47.7 percent) of the employed women in this age cohort had worked in a nonstandard job at least at one survey point.

Table 9.7 Employment Patterns from 1994 to 1998 for U.S. Women Aged 29–37 in 1994

	Number	As percentage of all women	As percentage of subcategory
Continuously employed, 1994–1998	3,144	76.0	100.0
In full-time jobs	1,627		51.8
In regular part-time jobs	274		8.7
In temporary jobs	6		0.2
In contract jobs	3		<0.1
In “other” nonstandard	7		0.2
In a combination of nonstandard jobs	130		4.1
Combined full-time and nonstandard jobs	989		31.5
Unable to categorize	108		3.4
Intermittently employed, 1994–1998	644	15.6	100.0
Full-time only	228		35.4
Nonstandard only	282		43.8
Combined full-time and nonstandard jobs	116		18.0
Unable to categorize	19		3.0
Continuously out of labor market	326	7.9	
All women, aged 29–37 in 1994	4,114		

SOURCE: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, weighted.

The data in Table 9.7 suggest that a considerable percentage of women combine work arrangements, but they do not indicate how long women stay in particular work arrangements, or what types of work arrangements women obtain on leaving nonstandard jobs. Given the high percentages of women in temporary and on-call work who would prefer regular employment, women may work in these arrangements only briefly while seeking standard full-time employment. Part-time workers are less likely to prefer full-time jobs; however, the reasons they offer for part-time employment often include obligations that

eventually end or diminish in urgency—schooling or family responsibilities—so these workers also may use part-time jobs temporarily.

The NLSY data allow us to further look at transitions to and from nonstandard employment over time to identify patterns of turnover in regular full-time and nonstandard jobs and to examine the origins and destinations of women as they enter and exit nonstandard jobs. To calculate transitions across work arrangements (including nonemployment), I compare the work arrangements of women in one survey year to the work arrangements they reported two years later. I summarize the two periods of cross-survey comparisons—1994 to 1996 and 1996 to 1998—in a single matrix of two-year transition rates.

The female labor force as a whole shows very high rates of employment stability in full-time jobs (see Table 9.8). About 83 percent of women working full-time in one year still worked full-time two years later (although they may work for a different employer; these analyses identify employment stability by work arrangement, not employer). Employment stability in part-time work is much lower at 57 percent, and is quite low in other nonstandard arrangements; just 19.2 percent of temporary workers, 22.6 percent of contract workers, and 21.5 percent of other nonstandard workers remained in these work arrangements two years later. Table 9.8 also shows whether women in nonstandard work arrangements moved to regular full-time jobs, to other nonstandard jobs, or out of the labor market entirely. Nearly one-third of women working part-time had moved to regular full-time jobs within two years. Relatively few women moved from part-time jobs to temporary, contract, or other nonstandard jobs. Most temporary workers who exited temporary work moved into regular full-time employment, but 14 percent of women who were in temporary work at the beginning of the two-year period were without a job at the end of the two-year period—a higher percentage than any other type of work arrangement (except for those who were not employed at the outset). Contract workers were most likely to exit contract employment and shift to full-time work within two years, but slightly more than one-fifth moved to part-time jobs, and nontrivial proportions ended up in temporary or other nonstandard jobs or without a job entirely. In general, women in nonstandard work arrangements at the beginning of the two-year time period were more likely than women in full-time jobs to end up without a job two years later. Finally, women who moved from

Table 9.8 Transition Patterns across Work Arrangements for All U.S. Women (%)

Time <i>t</i>	Time <i>t</i> + 1	Regular full-time	Regular part-time	Temporary	Contract	Other nonstandard	No job	As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i>
Regular full-time		83.3	10.2	1.5	0.9	1.6	2.5	56.9
Regular part-time		30.6	57.0	2.8	2.0	2.7	4.8	20.0
Temporary		42.3	22.1	19.2	1.4	0.5	14.1	2.6
Contract		35.5	22.6	4.8	22.6	8.9	8.1	1.5
Other nonstandard		35.0	28.5	1.9	5.1	21.5	7.5	2.6
No job		14.4	14.1	2.7	0.8	1.9	66.0	16.4
As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i> + 1		58.5	21.1	2.5	1.5	2.5	13.9	100.0

N = 8,085.

SOURCE: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1994–98, weighted.

nonemployment to employment were somewhat more likely to move into a nonstandard work arrangement rather than directly into full-time jobs. Although 14.4 percent of nonemployed women moved into full-time jobs, 14.1 percent moved into part-time jobs, 2.7 percent moved into temporary jobs, and 2.7 percent moved into contract or other nonstandard jobs.

The greater likelihood of exiting the labor force or moving to other nonstandard work arrangements among nonstandard rather than regular full-time workers may stem from events in women's lives, such as childbirth, marriage, or divorce. Alternatively, women may leave the workforce discouraged by a lack of desirable opportunities, or they may move from nonstandard job to nonstandard job because they are unable to find other employment. Although the NLSY does not provide data on workers' reasons for shifting work arrangements, examining work transitions separately for women by skill levels and by whether they experienced major life transitions may shed light on the effects of employment opportunities, childbirth, marriage, and divorce on women's employment transitions.

Skill Levels

Differences in job stability across work arrangements may depend partly on skill level. Nonstandard workers work in occupations requiring fewer skills than regular full-time workers, and low-skill work is characterized by higher rates of turnover as workers seek more interesting and challenging work. Nevertheless, nonstandard work arrangements vary in their skill levels, and workers may be more receptive to nonstandard arrangements and less likely to quit if employers offer high-quality nonstandard jobs. Moreover, workers with high levels of skill may be better able to negotiate favorable nonstandard work arrangements and conditions than workers with fewer skills and, thus, may be more likely to stay in nonstandard jobs for longer periods of time. To evaluate how skill levels affect women's job stability and transitions across work arrangements, I summarized transition patterns separately for less-skilled women (defined as those with a high school education or less) and skilled women (those with more than a high school education).

A comparison of the two panels in Table 9.9 shows nearly equal rates of stability in regular full-time jobs for low- and high-skilled workers, but considerably lower rates of stability for low-skilled workers in part-time and temporary jobs. For example, just 15 percent of low-skilled temporary workers remained in temporary positions two years later, compared with 25 percent of higher-skilled temporary workers. Low-skilled workers in every type of nonstandard work were more likely than their high-skilled counterparts to move into regular full-time jobs by the end of a two-year period. However, low-skilled workers were also slightly more likely than high-skilled workers to move out of the workforce from full-time, part-time, and other nonstandard jobs. The overall distributions of women across work arrangements (see last column or row of panels) indicate a smaller percentage of low-skilled than high-skilled workers in regular, full-time work and larger percentages in temporary work or without a job. In sum, the patterns suggest that low-skilled workers are less likely to work in regular, full-time jobs than high-skilled workers, and that when low-skilled workers work in nonstandard jobs, they are less likely than their high-skilled counterparts to stay in them, perhaps because they are less able than higher skilled workers to negotiate favorable terms and conditions for nonstandard work or because low-skill jobs are inherently more unstable than skilled jobs.

Childbirth

Women may use nonstandard work arrangements to reduce or vary work commitments in conjunction with childbearing and increasing demands associated with the presence of a new family member. Women who had a child showed slightly lower rates of stability in full-time employment and higher rates of stability in nonstandard employment than women who did not give birth within each two-year period. Among women who bore a child, three-fourths of those in full-time jobs at the beginning of the two-year period remained in full-time jobs two years later. This rate is lower than the 84 percent of full-time women who did not bear a child; however, for both groups, there is considerable stability in full-time jobs (see Table 9.10). Women who exited from full-time jobs were more likely to move to part-time work or out of the labor force entirely if they gave birth than if they did not.

Table 9.9 Transition Patterns across Work Arrangements for Women by Education (%)

Time <i>t</i>	Time <i>t</i> + 1	Regular full-time	Regular part-time	Temporary	Contract	Other nonstandard	No job	As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i>
With a high school education or less								
Regular full-time		82.6	10.1	2.0	0.7	1.8	2.9	53.2
Regular part-time		36.6	53.1	2.2	1.2	2.0	5.1	20.6
Temporary		45.5	25.6	14.9	0.8	0.0	12.4	2.9
Contract		40.0	23.3	10.0	26.7	0.0	6.7	0.7
Other nonstandard		37.2	29.2	1.8	1.8	17.7	11.5	2.7
No job		16.5	14.7	2.7	0.4	2.6	63.0	19.9
As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i> + 1		57.3	20.9	2.6	0.9	2.4	15.8	100.0
<i>N</i> = 4,112								
With more than a high school education								
Regular full-time		83.9	10.2	1.1	1.1	1.5	2.2	60.8
Regular part-time		24.2	61.6	3.3	3.0	3.5	4.8	19.3
Temporary		38.0	18.5	25.0	2.2	1.1	16.3	2.3
Contract		36.7	22.4	4.1	24.5	6.1	8.2	1.2
Other nonstandard		33.1	25.5	2.1	11.7	24.1	4.8	3.7
No job		11.1	12.9	3.0	1.6	1.0	70.8	12.7
As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i> + 1		59.6	21.4	2.3	2.1	2.6	11.9	100.0
<i>N</i> = 3,971								

SOURCE: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1994–98, weighted.

Stability in part-time, temporary, and contract employment was higher among women who bore a child than those who did not. For example, nearly half of part-time workers who had not had a child in a two-year period had moved on to other work arrangements, typically to full-time work. In contrast, just one-quarter of those who gave birth had moved out of part-time employment. Temporary workers were twice as likely to retain temporary jobs if they had a child than if they did not. However, because workers in most other work arrangements were much less likely to move into temporary jobs after the birth of a child, the rate of temporary employment among childbearing women dropped after childbirth, from 3 percent to 1.4 percent (see Table 9.10).

Childbirth also had the effect of increasing the rate of part-time employment and nonemployment among women, and decreasing full-time employment. As a result, the work arrangements of childbearing and nonchildbearing women looked quite similar at the beginning of a time period (compare the last columns of each panel, Table 9.10), but had diverged by the end of the time period as some women who gave birth exited full-time employment, increased their rates of part-time employment, and dropped out of the labor force (compare the last rows of each panel, Table 9.10). Thus, childbearing apparently has a moderate effect on women's employment patterns and their use of nonstandard work arrangements, with women gravitating to part-time employment in particular and away from temporary employment. Access to part-time work may enable women to maintain labor force participation after childbirth rather than dropping out of the labor force. Indeed, although some women exited the labor force after childbirth, the vast majority—80 percent—did not. It is also important to note that although part-time employment increased as women bore children, it remained more common for childbearing women to work full-time than to work part-time.

Marriage and Divorce

To assess the effects of marriage and divorce on women's patterns of standard and nonstandard employment, I categorized women into four mutually exclusive groups: those who remained single throughout a two-year period, those who remained married throughout a two-year period, those who entered marriage within a two-year period, and those

Table 9.10 Transition Patterns across Work Arrangements for Women by Childbirth Status (%)

Time <i>t</i>	Time <i>t</i> + 1	Regular full-time	Regular part-time	Temporary	Contract	Other nonstandard	No job	As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i>
Who gave birth between time <i>t</i> and time <i>t</i> + 1								
Regular full-time		74.2	16.8	0.2	0.7	2.1	6.0	56.2
Regular part-time		14.0	74.1	0.0	2.8	3.5	4.9	18.5
Temporary		26.1	17.4	34.8	0.0	4.3	13.0	3.0
Contract		5.9	23.5	11.8	23.5	11.8	11.8	2.2
Other nonstandard		19.2	38.5	0.0	0.0	30.8	19.2	3.4
No job		2.3	3.9	0.8	0.8	1.6	89.1	16.7
As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i> + 1		46.2	26.3	1.4	1.7	3.4	20.6	100.0
<i>N</i> = 772								
Who did not give birth between time <i>t</i> and time <i>t</i> + 1								
Regular full-time		84.2	9.5	1.7	0.9	1.0	2.2	57.0
Regular part-time		32.3	55.3	3.1	1.8	2.6	4.8	20.1
Temporary		44.7	22.1	16.8	1.6	0.0	14.2	2.6
Contract		33.2	17.1	3.1	18.6	7.0	20.9	1.5
Other nonstandard		38.0	27.3	2.1	5.9	20.3	5.9	2.6
No job		15.8	15.1	3.0	0.8	1.9	63.5	16.3
As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i> + 1		59.8	20.6	2.6	1.5	2.4	13.5	100.0

N = 7,312

SOURCE: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1994–98, weighted.

who divorced within a two-year period. I averaged their work patterns across the two-year periods for a single summary matrix for each of the four groups. A comparison of the matrices for stably single and stably married women (Table 9.11) shows higher labor force participation rates overall for single women (11.5 percent of single women were not in the labor force at time $t + 1$ compared with 16 percent of married women; Table 9.11), with higher rates of full-time and temporary employment and lower rates of part-time and contract employment among single than married women. Single and married women had similar rates of stability in regular full-time jobs, but single women were much more likely than married women to move to regular full-time employment from nonstandard jobs, and they were much less likely to move to part-time or contract work from other work arrangements. Thus, married women appear to be much more likely to move to, and stay in, nonstandard jobs—at least part-time and contract jobs—than single women.

The distribution across work arrangements of women who divorced during a two-year period was very similar at time t to that of women who were continuously married (see Table 9.11). This pattern is not surprising given that women in this category were still married at time t . By time $t + 1$, the work arrangements and labor force participation rates of women who went through a divorce were more similar to those of single women. Divorced women were more likely than women in any other marital status group to move out of regular part-time work, with most moving to regular full-time jobs. They were also more likely to move from nonemployment into the labor force, resulting in a decline in the average nonemployment rate of 14 percent before divorce to just 8.8 percent afterward. Very few moved from nonemployment into nonstandard jobs. However, the small sample size (just 308 of the 4,114 women experienced a divorce between 1994 and 1998) precludes strong conclusions about the relationship between divorce and work patterns for work arrangements other than regular full-time and part-time jobs.

Women who married during a two-year period had the lowest rates of nonemployment and the highest rates of full-time employment of all the marital status groups (see Table 9.11). They showed relatively high rates of stability in both full-time and part-time jobs. (The small sample size for this group hinders strong interpretations of the transition rates

Table 9.11 Transition Patterns across Work Arrangements for Women by Marital Status (%)

Time <i>t</i>	Time <i>t</i> + 1	Regular full-time	Regular part-time	Temporary	Contract	Other nonstandard	No job	As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i>
Who remained single								
Regular full-time		84.9	9.2	2.2	0.6	1.2	1.9	64.8
Regular part-time		46.2	43.7	4.0	1.5	2.4	2.1	13.3
Temporary		46.6	19.2	21.9	1.4	1.4	9.6	3.0
Contract		46.4	7.1	10.7	10.7	10.7	7.1	1.1
Other nonstandard		48.1	14.8	1.9	1.9	27.8	7.4	2.2
No job		20.8	13.5	3.1	0.3	1.8	60.2	15.6
As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i> + 1		67.4	14.8	3.3	0.9	2.1	11.5	100.0
<i>N</i> = 2,460								
Who remained married								
Regular full-time		81.6	11.3	1.2	0.9	1.9	3.1	51.7
Regular part-time		24.8	62.0	2.6	2.2	2.6	5.8	23.6
Temporary		37.4	22.8	18.7	1.6	0.0	18.7	2.5
Contract		33.3	25.6	2.2	24.4	6.7	7.8	1.8
Other nonstandard		29.9	32.7	1.4	6.1	21.1	8.2	3.0
No job		9.7	14.5	2.7	1.1	2.2	70.1	17.4
As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i> + 1		52.1	25.0	2.3	1.8	2.7	16.0	100.0
<i>N</i> = 4,921								

(continued)

Table 9.11 (continued)

Time <i>t</i>	Time <i>t</i> + 1	Regular full-time	Regular part-time	Temporary	Contract	Other nonstandard	No job	As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i>
Who divorced								
Regular full-time		87.2	4.7	0.6	1.2	2.9	2.9	55.8
Regular part-time		50.0	36.8	2.6	2.6	2.6	5.3	24.7
Temporary		50.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9
Contract		0.0	25.0	0.0	25.0	50.0	0.0	1.3
Other nonstandard		33.3	16.7	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9
No job		39.5	14.0	2.3	0.0	2.3	41.9	14.0
As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i> + 1		68.8	15.6	1.6	1.6	2.9	8.8	100.0
<i>N</i> = 308								
Who married								
Regular full-time		86.9	9.0	0.7	2.1	0.3	1.4	73.7
Regular part-time		37.0	58.7	2.2	0.0	4.3	0.0	11.7
Temporary		54.5	27.3	18.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8
Contract		0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
Other nonstandard		57.1	42.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	1.8
No job		25.7	11.4	2.9	0.0	0.0	65.7	8.9
As a percentage of all women at time <i>t</i> + 1		73.2	15.8	1.5	2.3	1.0	6.9	100.0
<i>N</i> = 392								

SOURCE: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1994–98, weighted.

from less prevalent nonstandard work arrangements.) The findings suggest that marriage has little effect on women's work patterns, perhaps because women who marry in their 30s may be a self-selected group whose commitment to the labor market affects both their marital and their work patterns. (Of course, this group of women includes those who delayed marriage until their 30s as well as those who are not marrying for the first time; although the effects of marriage on work patterns may differ for these two subgroups of women, the sample size is too small to allow reliable comparisons.)

Presence of Children

Finally, I present transition patterns separately for women by parental and marital status. In general, single and married women without children are less likely to work in nonstandard jobs than mothers, and single mothers are less likely than married mothers to work in nonstandard jobs (see last columns or rows of Table 9.12). However, although parental status may affect women's rates of full-time work, the stability rates of those in regular full-time jobs were similar for women in every family type. Turnover in nonstandard jobs did, however, vary somewhat across family type. The stability rates for childless single women show that nearly half remained in part-time jobs two years later—slightly higher than the rates of single mothers or childless married women, but much lower than married mothers. A considerable minority of childless single women remained in temporary, contract, and other nonstandard jobs two years later, and their stability rates in these types of jobs were substantially higher than those of married women. However, childless single women who did not remain in the same nonstandard arrangement two years later were more likely than women in any other group to shift to a regular, full-time job. Childless married women also showed higher rates of stability in temporary, contract, and other nonstandard jobs than mothers, but they differed from childless single women in that fewer of those who left a nonstandard arrangement moved to full-time jobs, while more shifted to regular part-time jobs (see Table 9.12).

The presence of children clearly affects women's transition patterns, but the patterns depend on whether mothers are single or married. Single mothers have lower rates of stability in all nonstandard

Table 9.12 Transition Patterns across Work Arrangements by Parental and Marital Status (%)

Time t	Time $t + 1$	Regular full-time	Regular part-time	Temporary	Contract	Other nonstandard	No job	As a percentage of all women at time t
Single women with no children								
Regular full-time		86.7	8.5	1.8	1.1	1.3	0.7	74.3
Regular part-time		40.1	48.9	2.2	0.7	7.3	2.2	11.6
Temporary		51.7	10.3	31.0	0.0	3.4	3.4	2.4
Contract		54.5	0.0	0.0	27.3	9.1	0.0	0.9
Other nonstandard		55.6	8.3	0.0	0.0	27.8	5.6	3.0
No job		15.2	14.1	2.2	0.0	2.2	66.3	7.8
As a percentage of all women at time $t + 1$		73.7	13.6	2.4	1.3	3.0	6.2	100.0
$N = 1,185$								
Single women with children								
Regular full-time		83.8	9.8	2.2	0.4	1.0	2.6	60.2
Regular part-time		47.9	43.7	4.6	1.7	0.8	1.7	14.3
Temporary		44.6	25.0	16.1	1.8	0.0	10.7	3.4
Contract		36.8	10.5	15.8	10.5	10.5	10.5	1.1
Other nonstandard		34.6	26.9	26.9	11.5	19.2	7.7	1.6
No job		22.9	13.1	11.0	0.3	0.9	59.0	19.6
As a percentage of all women at time $t + 1$		64.3	16.1	3.4	0.8	1.3	14.1	100.0
$N = 1,666$								

Married women with no children							
Regular full-time	83.3	11.0	0.3	1.0	2.4	2.2	74.8
Regular part-time	43.3	44.3	2.1	1.0	3.1	5.2	12.2
Temporary	14.3	28.6	42.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Contract	25.0	37.5	0.0	18.8	6.3	6.3	2.0
Other nonstandard	22.7	4.5	9.1	4.5	50.0	0.0	2.8
No job	17.2	5.2	1.7	1.7	3.4	69.0	7.3
As a percentage of all women at time $t + 1$	70.4	15.1	1.5	1.8	4.0	7.6	100.0
$N = 793$							
Married women with children							
Regular full-time	81.6	10.9	1.4	0.9	1.9	3.3	47.8
Regular part-time	24.9	62.0	2.6	2.2	2.5	5.8	25.7
Temporary	39.7	23.1	17.4	1.7	0.0	19.0	2.7
Contract	33.3	24.4	2.6	24.4	9.0	7.7	1.8
Other nonstandard	31.3	36.6	0.8	5.3	14.5	9.2	3.0
No job	10.8	15.1	2.7	0.8	2.1	68.6	19.0
As a percentage of all women at time $t + 1$	50.1	26.1	2.4	1.5	2.5	17.0	100.0
$N = 4,436$							

SOURCE: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1994–98, weighted.

work arrangements than married mothers, and when they exit non-standard work arrangements, they are more likely to move into full-time jobs (see Table 9.12). However, a higher percentage of single mothers appear to land in temporary jobs; a considerable proportion of those who held part-time, contract, or other nonstandard jobs at the beginning of the two-year period were working in temporary jobs by the end of the period. Not surprisingly then, the rate of temporary employment among single mothers at 3.4 percent is higher than that of women in any other family type. Because data on reasons for nonstandard employment are not available in the NLSY, it is impossible to determine with certainty whether these single mothers want temporary jobs, but the fact that they are more likely to leave temporary jobs (only 16.1 percent are still in temporary jobs by time $t + 1$) than any other group suggests that they do not choose these jobs voluntarily. Moreover, the CPS data show that nearly 70 percent of single mothers in temporary jobs would prefer permanent positions (see Table 9.4).

Together, the matrices of women's employment patterns suggest that women who are stably married, those who are married and have children, and those who recently had a child are most likely to use non-standard work arrangements and to stay in them—particularly in part-time jobs. Very few women hold temporary, contract, or other non-standard jobs for long durations of time. Workers in these types of arrangements most commonly move into full-time positions, although they are also much more likely than regular full-time workers to be without a job by the subsequent survey date. Given the ready availability of temporary and contract jobs, women's high transition rates from these jobs suggest that women typically do not find these work arrangements suitable for their long-term needs. Although this comes as no surprise for temporary work, which is not stable by definition and which researchers agree is typically a marginal form of employment, it does suggest that workers do not view contract jobs on par with regular full-time work, despite the similarities of these two work arrangements, at least in terms of pay, benefits, and work characteristics (e.g., Kalleberg et al. 1997; Kalleberg, Reskin, and Hudson 2000).

CONCLUSION

One-third of women workers in the United States currently work in nonstandard work arrangements. A much larger percentage have worked or will work in nonstandard jobs over their work history. As the data from the NLSY show, nearly half of all working women born between 1957 and 1965 reported nonstandard employment in at least one of three surveys between 1994 and 1998. Consequently, it is of great importance to understand the promise of such jobs for meeting women's employment and economic needs as well as their family needs. Evidence to date provides a mixed view of nonstandard work arrangements. Part-time, temporary agency, and on-call jobs tend to be clustered in occupations that offer few opportunities to exercise challenging and complex skills and are characterized by routine, repetitive tasks, while direct-hire and contract jobs are similar to full-time jobs in their skill characteristics. Part-time, temporary, and on-call workers earn considerably less on average than similar regular full-time workers, are less likely to receive health insurance or retirement benefits, and are more likely to live in families with incomes near or below the poverty line (Kalleberg et al. 1997; Kalleberg, Reskin, and Hudson 2000; Houseman and Osawa, in this volume). Contract workers earn hourly wages that are as much or more than their regular full-time counterparts but receive fewer benefits (Kalleberg, Reskin, and Hudson 2000; Houseman and Osawa, in this volume), and many do not work full-time. The majority of women who work in temporary, on-call, and contract jobs would prefer regular employment and work in these jobs primarily because they were unable to find regular work or because they hoped their position would become a regular position. Most women in these arrangements do not stay in them for long periods of time, and although many move from their nonstandard jobs into full-time jobs, a substantial minority end up in other types of nonstandard work or without a job altogether.

Nevertheless, nonstandard jobs are not universally bad, nor do all workers desire regular employment. In part-time work especially, the majority of women do not prefer regular, full-time work. In addition, almost 30 percent of temporary workers, 40 percent of contract workers, and 47 percent of on-call workers would not prefer a regular job.

Women voluntarily work in nonstandard jobs for a variety of reasons; some to continue working while tending to other family or personal needs and interests, others to pursue schooling or training, and yet others because they want flexible or short-term employment. Women also differ in the education, skills, and experience they bring to the labor market, and more skilled and educated women may be more successful than others in parlaying their advantages into nonstandard work arrangements that meet their needs and preferences. For example, Tilly (1996) found that although most part-time jobs are located in the secondary labor market and are characterized by little skill and low wages, a minority of women obtain “retention” part-time jobs, which offer high wages and challenging work. Variation in the skills, characteristics, and consequences of work within each type of nonstandard work arrangement draws attention to the importance of recognizing the heterogeneity of nonstandard jobs in addition to the typical characteristics of such jobs that have been the focus of most research (but see Polivka 1996; Blank 1998; and Cohany 1998). Clearly, some workers are in nonstandard arrangements that fit their preferences and needs and offer them the type of work they desire.

It is women with family responsibilities in particular who are thought to benefit from the availability and growth of nonstandard work (e.g., Schwartz 1989; Blossfeld 1997; Hakim 1997). How important are workers’ family arrangements for understanding women’s participation in nonstandard work? The data suggest workers’ family arrangements do affect their participation in and patterns of nonstandard work. Married women are more likely than single women to move into and stay in some types of nonstandard jobs, particularly part-time and on-call arrangements. Married women with children are most likely to work in nonstandard jobs compared with childless married women or single women with or without children. They are somewhat less likely to report a preference for regular employment than childless single women, although for the most part, differences in work preferences across family type were not significant. Married women who have children are more likely than women in any other family type to work in nonstandard jobs. Some researchers have argued that the overrepresentation of married women in part-time and on-call work may be less reflective of women’s voluntary choices and preferences and more reflective of the structural constraints on women’s choices, such as the

availability of child care (see O'Reilly and Fagan 1998). This is a valid point but difficult to test given the data presented in this chapter. A rare piece of evidence for this argument is the finding that, among the women who reported a preference for part-time work, 5 percent cited child care problems as their reason for working part-time. Nonetheless, with this caution in mind, the findings are consistent with the argument that some women use nonstandard work arrangements, primarily regular part-time jobs, to balance work and family.

That nonstandard work accommodates the needs of some women, however, does not mean that family responsibilities or other interests are the primary explanation for women's participation in nonstandard jobs, nor does it imply that such jobs are entirely unproblematic even for those who voluntarily work in them. Instead, while women's family responsibilities appear to be related to their use of part-time jobs, they are not strongly linked with any other type of nonstandard work arrangement. Married women were no more likely than single women to work in contract jobs, and were less likely than single women to work in agency or direct-hire temporary jobs. Of the married women who did work in nonstandard arrangements other than regular part-time jobs, the majority would have preferred regular employment. Moreover, even if nonstandard work does fit the needs and preferences of some women, the argument that nonstandard jobs undermine women's economic security also finds support in findings that nonstandard jobs typically provide inferior opportunities for skill development, and they offer less pay and fewer benefits than regular full-time employment.

Attention to the economic consequences for women in nonstandard jobs is particularly critical for single mothers, given the recent (1996) reforms in welfare programs in the United States mandating work in exchange for cash assistance benefits. Requirements that welfare recipients find employment may push women to accept temporary and other nonstandard work arrangements that enable them to meet employment requirements but not necessarily gain economic security. The NLSY data show that rates of temporary employment are higher among single mothers than women in any other family type. Single mothers rarely report a preference for temporary over regular employment, and those who work in temporary jobs show high exit rates within two years. However, single mothers are more likely than women in any other fam-

ily type to end up in temporary jobs after working in other nonstandard jobs or full-time jobs, or after periods of nonemployment. As single mothers approach time limits on welfare assistance (another welfare reform stipulation) the economic security of these families will be in greater jeopardy.

The inferior pay, benefits, and quality that are typical of nonstandard work arrangements are cause for concern for women in every family type. Considerable growth in nonstandard jobs over the past several decades (Abraham 1990; Gonos 1997) and the overrepresentation of women in such jobs mean that large percentages of women are employed on a nonstandard basis for some proportion of their work lives. Further research must assess the long-term consequences of nonstandard employment for women, their families, and for society. Understanding the conditions under which nonstandard arrangements work well for women and families, as well as the conditions under which such arrangements constrain women's workplace opportunities, individual and family earnings, and health and pension benefits over the long term, is critical for constructing work arrangements and family and employment policies that protect the economic security of women and their families.

Notes

I am grateful to Jamie Przybysz and Laura Geschwender for their research and technical assistance on this project, to Anne Polivka for sharing with me her expertise on the Current Population Survey, and to Susan Houseman and Machiko Osawa for their careful reading and valuable feedback on an earlier draft of this chapter.

1. This paper does not consider the nearly 9 percent of women who worked in independent contracting or self-employment arrangements.
2. Some workers hold full-time jobs and are on-call after regular work hours. I did not include these workers in the on-call category.
3. Estimates of part-time work in other studies are generally higher because they include nonstandard workers who work part-time hours.
4. Data on occupational skill complexity come from the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*. Values range from 0 to 8 for people skills, 0 to 6 for data skills, and 0 to 7 on skills with things; variables are coded so that higher values reflect greater skill complexity. *People skills* involve tasks such as taking instruction and serving (low complexity) to negotiating and mentoring (high complexity). *Skills with data* range from comparing and copying data (low complexity) to coordinating and

synthesizing data (high complexity). *Skills with things* entail tasks such as handling, feeding, or tending machinery (low complexity) to precision working and setting up (high complexity). *Repetitive process* measures the percentage of workers in the occupation that must perform repetitive work or continuously perform the same work following set procedures, sequences, or speeds. *Routinized work* measures the percentage of workers in jobs requiring a preference for routine, concrete, organized tasks. *Specific vocational preparation* is the amount of training required to achieve average performance on the job.

5. In fact, the percentage who held a temporary job during this time period is likely to be even higher than this figure. The estimates reported here are based on workers' responses about their current main job at the time of the survey. However, the surveys are conducted two years apart, and some workers are likely to have held temporary jobs in the two-year interim but not during the survey weeks which would not be reflected in these estimates.

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Nonstandard Work in Developed Economies

Causes and Consequences

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And
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Editors

2003

W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Nonstandard work in developed economies : causes and consequences /
Susan Houseman and Machiko Osawa, editors.

p. cm.

“These papers were originally presented at a conference sponsored by the
Japan Foundation and the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research
in August 2000”—Introd.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-88099-264-6 (alk. paper) — ISBN 0-88099-263-8 (pbk. : alk.
paper)

1. Hours of labor, Flexible—Developed countries—Congresses. 2. Part
time employment—Developed countries—Cross-cultural
studies—Congresses. 3. Temporary employment—Developed
countries—Cross-cultural studies—Congresses. 4. Employment (Economic
theory)—Congresses. I. Houseman, Susan N., 1956- II. Osawa, Machiko.

III. Title

HD5109.N66 2003

331.2572091722—dc22

2003019015

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W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research
300 S. Westnedge Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007-4686

The facts presented in this study and the observations and viewpoints expressed are the
sole responsibility of the authors. They do not necessarily represent positions of the
W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

Cover design by J.R. Underhill.

Index prepared by Nancy Humphreys.

Printed in the United States of America.

Printed on recycled paper.