Family Attributes in the Return to Full-Time and Part-Time Employment

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Abstract

On the basis of the 1992-93 Survey of Income and Labour Dynamics, we consider the return to full-time and part-time employment as competing risks for persons who have been not-employed after a period of employment. It is found that family characteristics play a larger role than human capital factors in this transition. In particular, married men are more likely to return to employment, especially full-time. While married women are not significantly different from single women, cohabitating women are more likely to return to full-time employment. Women are affected by the presence of young children, but only in terms of a lower likelihood of full-time employment; women with young children are not less likely to return to part-time employment. The results suggest that education and training play lesser roles than the division of paid and unpaid work in the re-employment prospects after a period of non-employment.

Résumé

En utilisant l'enquête 1992-93 sur le revenu et la   main d'oeuvre, nous considérons le retour au travail à temps plein ou à temps partiel comme des risques alternatifs pour les personnes qui ont eu une période sans emploi après une période d'emploi.   Dans cette transition, les caractéristiques familiaux sont plus importants que les facteurs de capital humain.   En particulier, les hommes mariés sont plus probables à retourner à l'emploi, surtout à plein temps.   Tendis que les femmes marrées ne sont pas très différentes des femmes célibataires, celles en union libre sont plus probables à revenir à l'emploi à temps plein.   Les trajectoires des femmes dépendent de la présence de jeunes enfants, mais seulement par rapport aux probabilités moindres de revenir à l'emploi à plein temps; les femmes avec jeunes enfants ne sont pas moins probables à revenir à l'emploi temps partiel. Les résultats suggèrent que l'éducation et l'entraînement sont moins importants que la division du travail payé et non-payé dans les prospects de retour à l'emploi après une période sans emploi.

Keywords: *employment, labour force activity, full-time, part-time*

Introduction

Since the 1960s, the employment patterns have changed drastically in Canada and other developed countries.   There has been an increase in the proportion of the population that is part of the labour force, along with higher levels of unemployment and more non-standard work including part-time, temporary, and own-account self-employment.   In particular, the proportion of those employed part-time among the employed population grew steadily from 11 percent in 1976 to 17 percent in 1994 (Krahn, 1995).   While labour force participation and unemployment have become more equal by sex, there remains a considerable gap in part-time employment wherein close to three-quarters of part-time workers are women.

Part-time employment is qualitatively   different, beyond the difference in the number of hours worked (Korpi, 1989; Wright and Hinde, 1991).   Part-time employment is concentrated in the service sector, mainly in relatively unskilled or de-skilled occupations (Economic Council of Canada, 1990).   Part-time employment also tends to be in marginal jobs, with low pay, few benefits and limited opportunities for career advancement (Phillips, 1989; Duffy and Pupo, 1992).

In spite of the significant differences between full-time and part-time employment, there are few studies in labour market transition distinguishing between these alternatives. For instance, Davidson (1994) speaks of the need to

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include a measure of women as part-time workers in demographic and family research.

This paper examines the labour market transition experience of persons who are not-employed or jobless, using longitudinal data from the first release of Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics conducted by Statistics Canada.   Specifically, we are seeking to document the duration of the jobless spells and the rate of leaving non-employment, using full-time and part-time employment as two competing outcomes.   We are particularly interested in the impact of demographic and family factors on the probability of re-employment into part-time and full-time work.

Labour Market Transition: Empirical Findings and Hypotheses

There are two sets of variables which are important in influencing employment decisions and outcomes: (1) human capital factors, (2) demographic and family attributes (Soltero,1996; Gauthier,1990; Le Bourdais and Desrosiers, 1990). Education, training, ability and experience are attributes that qualify individuals for employment and affect their work performance.   These individual characteristics are emphasized by human capital theory, which claims that employment outcome is the product of individual investments and commitments in education, training, migration, or other job-related experiences. A number of studies document the importance of the human capital factor in the employment outcomes (e.g., Gilbert, 1993;   Duffy and Pupo, 1992; Soltero, 1996).

Although human capital factors are relevant, demographic and family attributes such as age, marital status and presence of pre-school children also play significant roles either in encouraging or reducing employment. For instance, Gauthier (1990) observed large differences between age groups concerning the rate and duration of unemployment, regardless of the supply and demand of the labour market.   A study of duration of unemployment by Corak (1990) also finds that age is the most important determinant of the length of unemployment, and that older workers face more difficulties in finding re-employment.

A study in Great Britain reports that marital status, number and age of dependent children, and age are important explanatory variables undermining the female labour market transitions between unemployment, full time employment, and part-time employment (Wright and Hinde, 1991).   Women who work despite having characteristics that discourage employment are more likely to work part-time (Ermisch and Wright, 1993).   There is also evidence of links between family formation events and unemployment for men.   For instance, Payne (1989) shows that marriage appears to reduce the probability of unemployment, even for husbands who married early, while marital breakdown raises the chance of unemployment. In a study of duration of joblessness among white men in the United States, Teachman, Call and Carver (1994) find that marital status is a significant predictor of the length of time spent without a job,

with married men in any given month being 50 to 100 percent more likely to take a job than single men.

The presence of dependent children has a major impact on employment. Both marriage and childrearing affect women more adversely than men in terms of their likelihood of returning to work (Wenk and Rosenfeld, 1989; Li and Currie, 1992; Kempeneers and Saint-Pierre, 1993). In effect, Cook and Beaujot (1996) find that the presence of young children tend to increase the probability of work interruptions for women but to reduce interruptions for men. Clearly, a substantial part of gender differences in work interruptions can be attributed to the unequal effects of marriage and childrearing. That is, marital status and family characteristics influence both the need to gain income from paid work and the person's availability for employment. The presence of children increases the need for income, but young children also place high demands for child care and housework which compete with paid work. Marital status is an indicator of the potential to make various inter-personal arrangements in the division of paid and unpaid work. Marriage in particular can prompt an unequal division and specialization, while cohabitation can imply a greater need to remain self-sufficient.

Given the significance of employment for individual and family well-being, it is important to further assess how re-employment in Canada is linked to socioeconomic, demographic and family factors. In particular, it is useful to contrast the human capital and family factors in the duration of joblessness and timing patterns of returning to employment. Based on the human capital model, we hypothesize that the individual with higher education and longer work experience is more likely to be re-employed. We further hypothesize that age is negatively related with the probability of re-employment, with the older people being less likely to be re-employed. Marriage is expected to be positively associated with re-employment for men but negatively for women. Compared to marriage, cohabitation is expected to have less differential impact on women and men. The presence of young children is expected to affect women's probability of re-employment negatively, but it is less likely to affect men's re-employment. Our main interest is to compare the relative importance of human capital factors and family factors in the return to employment. Other available variables are controlled in the analysis, in particular immigration status, visible minority status and region. Age is also controlled, since several previous analyses indicate that older workers have more difficulty returning to employment. However, our main interest is to compare the relative impact of human capital and family attributes in the return to employment after a period of non-employment. If human capital considerations play a significant role, this would point to the importance of education and re-training as means of improving the prospects of quicker return to employment. However, if family factors, particularly marital status and presence of young children, play a significant role, then this points to the importance of the division of paid and unpaid work in families, along with the extent of social responsibility for child care. In addition, family factors may play a significant role in the return to part-time employment.

Methodology

Data

The data used in this research are taken from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) 1992-93 public micro-data file provided by the Statistics Canada. SLID is a recently introduced longitudinal household panel survey which is designed to capture changes in the economic situations of individuals and families over time and the determinants of their well-being. Starting in 1993, SLID will have a series of panels with one new panel being introduced every three years. Each panel includes approximately 20,000 households, including about 40,000 individuals aged 16 years and over. The SLID sample is selected from the non-institutional and non-Reserve population living in the ten provinces. Each panel of respondents will be followed for a period of six years. Consequently, there will always be two overlapping panels after 1996. The value of SLID is that of a large scale, longitudinal survey which allows for the analysis of a whole range of transitions, durations and repeat occurrences of people's work and economic situations.

The SLID 1992-93 micro-data public file is based on the first panel and the preliminary interview. It should be noted that many individual and family characteristics are not available in the SLID public file for reason of confidentiality. In addition, since it is the first wave, longitudinal data can only be obtained from the retrospective questions.

Measures

A jobless spell, derived from employment start and end dates, is a period during which the respondent did not have an employer and was not self-employed. Jobless spells are periods without employment after given jobs have ended. That is, jobless spells are only applicable to people who have ever been employed. According to this definition, joblessness is not necessarily unemployment because we do not have direct information pertaining to job search behaviour that would allow us to replicate the definition of unemployment used by the Statistics Canada. In order to remove the problem of jobless spells that started after a part-time job while someone was still a student, the population base is restricted to ages 24 to 63.

We estimate that 33 percent of the Canadian population aged 24-63 had at least one jobless spell in 1993. Among those who had a jobless spell, only 11 percent of them reported two jobless spells, and only one percent had three or more spells of jobless. SLID contains the starting date, ending date and duration of every jobless spell, for up to seven spells. To make the analyses simple, only the first jobless spell is used. Relatively short durations are likely to be normal transition periods between successive jobs, therefore we exclude the jobless spells of less than four weeks. The cases involving more than two years (106 weeks) of joblessness are also excluded from the sample on the grounds that long term joblessness may have different dynamics of entry and exit. By

restricting the duration of joblessness to less than two years, the chance of recall error is also reduced. In addition, since the respondents' socioeconomic and demographic characteristics are known only in 1992 and 1993, this restriction increases the validity of the assumption of fixed covariates.

Accordingly, our sample consists of 1688 men and 1563 women who had a jobless spell in 1993 that had lasted between four weeks and two years. The dependent variable in this analysis is the duration of joblessness, measured in weeks. We consider several covariates thought to affect the probability of re-employment, including age, marital status, education, full-time working experience (part-time experience is not available), presence of young children aged 0-4, immigration status, visible minority status, and region of residence. Since the number and age of one's children are not available in the SLID public micro-data, age of the youngest family member is used to approximate the presence of 0-4 year-old child(ren). All the covariates are assumed to be fixed throughout the jobless spell.

Methods

The statistical method we employ is the competing-risks model within the framework of proportional hazard model. The competing-risks model is applicable to the survival data in which the failure of an individual may be one of several distinct types or causes (Allison, 1984; Kalbfleisch and Prentice, 1980). In the present study, full-time and part-time employment are treated as competing risks. The major advantage of the competing-risks model is that the intensity of entry into full-time employment and that of entry into part-time employment can be considered as two separate models. The continuous time competing-risks model is given by:

$$\lambda_j(t|X) = \lambda_{0j}(t)\exp(X'\beta)$$

Where

$j = 1, 2, \dots r$ is the cause or type of failure;

$\lambda_{0j}(t)$ is the cause specific baseline hazard function which is interpreted as the estimated hazard for persons for whom all the predictor variables are the reference groups;

X is a vector of covariates which are assumed to be fixed (not changing with time);

β is a vector of the coefficients of covariates;

$\lambda_j(t|X)$ is the instantaneous rate of failure for type j at time t given X and in the presence of the other failure types. It can be obtained by regarding all failures of

types other than j as censored at the individual's failure time (data collecting time).

Proportional hazard modeling is used mainly because it is remarkably general and nonrestrictive, that is, it does not specify the exact form of the hazard distribution. The time patterns of the hazard rate of leaving joblessness are influenced by so many variables that no consistent estimates can be made. For instance, DeWit (1992:158) assumes that the re-employment probability of jobless women declines with duration. On the other hand, Ludwig (1992) finds that the re-employment opportunities for the unemployed rise with the duration of unemployment. Klein (1992) argues that great caution is required in trying to draw inferences about the effect of time on the hazard rate of re-employment. First, there is likely a selection process among the unemployed, inasmuch as those with high probabilities of re-employment leave unemployment more rapidly, so that the remaining unemployed population is increasingly dominated by those with lower chances. On the other hand, the re-employment curve is pulled upward by the increase motivation over time, as unemployment compensation runs out. In sum, how the duration of joblessness influences re-employment probabilities remains uncertain. Accordingly, the commonly used parametric specifications for the baseline hazard are likely to be too restrictive in analyzing the duration of joblessness (Kerckhoffs, de-Neubourg and Palm, 1994). Consequently, the proportional hazard model is preferred over the parametric hazard model for the present study.

Additionally, the problem of applying sample weights needs to be carefully considered. The sampling weight attached to a record indicates the number of units in the population that are represented by a given sample unit. There are four types of weights in the SLID public micro-data file: the longitudinal weight, cross-sectional weight, sub-sampling weight, and cross-sectional labour weight. Since our attention is focused on the people with a jobless spell in the single year of 1993, the cross-sectional labour weight was adopted. It is also important to keep in mind that the significance levels of hypothesis tests (t tests, $\chi2$, etc.) generated by most statistical software are incorrect when sample weights are applied. These test results were adjusted by the inflation factor (average sample weight).

Results

Table 1 presents the sample characteristics and mean duration of joblessness for persons who entered full-time and part-time employment, for men and women, respectively. As mentioned previously, only the first jobless spell in 1993 that lasted between four weeks and two years is used. It is seen that a higher proportion of women enter part-time employment, and there is a longer duration of non-employment in the case of entry into part-time work. This table also indicates the importance of using a statistical approach that can look at durations while properly handling the censored cases.

Table 1
**Weighted Number of Cases (N), Mean and Median of the Duration of Joblessness by Outcomes, Canada, 1993.**

	Sample Size N	Mean (weeks)	Median (weeks)
Jobless Men Who			
Find Full-Time Employment	871	33.22	30
Find Part-Time Employment	66	36.61	27
Censored	643	42.07	37
Jobless Women Who	497	37.11	35
Find Full-Time Employment	219	41.60	35
Find Part-Time Employment	889	50.40	50
Censored			

The plot of hazard rates of leaving joblessness by duration is presented in Figure 1 for men and Figure 2 for women.   The gender disparities in the types of employment are pronounced. Men tend to have a greater probability of working full-time at each duration under consideration, whereas women exhibit a much greater propensity to enter part-time employment.   Moreover, it is evident that men and women demonstrate quite different timing patterns of return to employment. For men, the trend is that the hazard rate steadily increases until reaching a peak around seven months (30 weeks) into the jobless period, after which it declines gradually. With respect to women, the likelihood curve of finding full-time employment is roughly flat, while the propensity of finding part-time work steadily increases with time.

Table 2 and Table 3 display the results of fitting a proportional hazard model (model 1) and competing-risks model (model 2 and 3) to the duration of joblessness for men and women respectively. The results are the relative risks of leaving joblessness holding other covariates constant. The data indicate that age is indeed the most important and consistent determinant of re-employment probability for both men and women.   The tendency is that the younger the cohort the higher likelihood of leaving joblessness, especially for full-time employment.   For example, in the age group 19-33, men are about 190.5 percent, and women 107.1 percent more likely than their counterparts in the age group 49-63 to enter full-time employment in any given week. These results are congruous with findings from Corak (1990) and Gauthier (1990) concerning age differentials in the rate and duration of unemployment.   Young people tend to have a unique pattern of employment: a higher incidence of unemployment, shorter periods of joblessness, and a greater frequency of alternating between school and work.

Figure 1. Hazard Rate of Leaving Joblessness in 1993, by
Duration of Joblessness, Men Aged 24-63, Canada
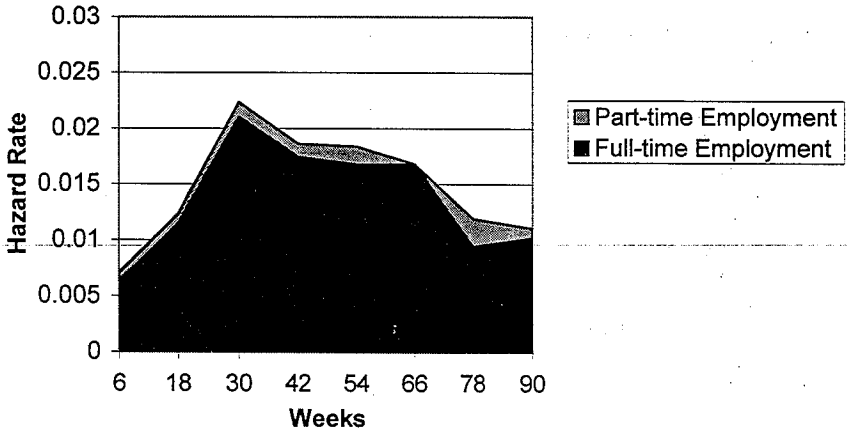
Figure 2. Hazard Rate of Leaving Joblessness in 1993, by
Duration of Joblessness, Women Aged 24-63, Canada
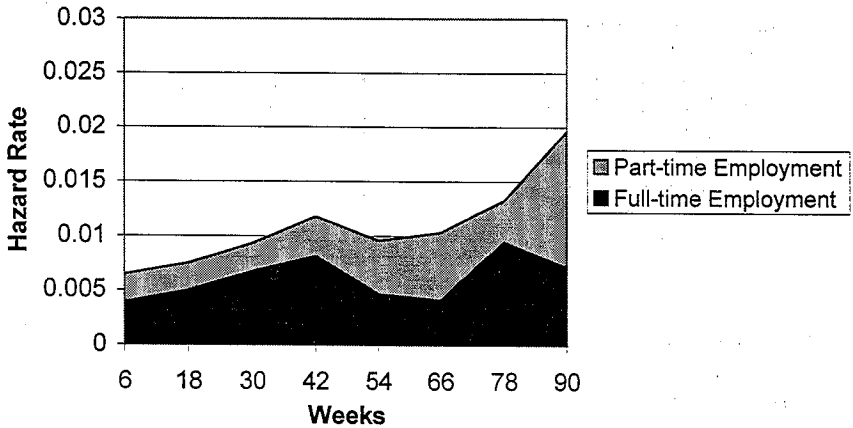
Table 2

The Relative Risks of Leaving Joblessness, by Type of Employment for Men Aged 24 to 63, Canada: 1993

Covariates	Model 1 Combined	Model 2 Full-time	Model 3 Part-time
Demographic Characteristics			
Age			
24 - 33	2.823 ***	2.905 ***	2.029
34 - 48	2.523 ***	2.629 ***	1.360
49 - 63	1.000	1.000	1.000
Region			
Quebec	0.782 **	0.79 **	0.669
Other	1.000	1.000	1.000
Immigration Status			
Immigrant	0.681 **	0.694 **	0.503
Canadian-born	1.000	1.000	1.000
Visible Minority Status			
Yes	0.833	0.742	2.645
No	1.000	1.000	1.000
Family Characteristics			
Marital Status in 1992			
Married	1.453 ***	1.408 ***	2.109 *
Common-law	1.188	1.196	1.013
Divorced	1.024	0.987	1.675
Never Married	1.000	1.000	1.000
Presence of Children Aged 0 - 4 Years			
Yes	1.020	1.029	0.930
No	1.000	1.000	1.000
Human Capital Variables			
Education			
<11 Years of Schooling	0.821	0.934	0.172 ***
11 Years - High School	0.877	0.979	0.26 ***
College	0.894	0.955	0.502 *
University	1.000	1.000	1.000
Full-Time Work Experience			
None (Less than half year)	0.944	0.974	0.399
1 - 5 Years	1.130	1.045	2.6 *
6 - 15 Years	0.884	0.860	1.240
>15 Years	1.000	1.000	1.000
Percent Censored	46.14	50.33	95.82
Chi-Square (score)	137.911	128.013	40.659
Degree of Freedom	15	15	15
P-value	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001

Note: Two-tailed t-test of signficance level: $*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$, $***p < 0.001$.

Table 3

The Relative Risks of Leaving Joblessness, by Type of Employment
for Women Aged 24 to 63, Canada: 1993

Covariates	Model 1 Combined	Model 2 Full-time	Model 3 Part-time
Demographic Characteristics			
Age			
24 - 33	1.917 ***	2.071 ***	1.605 *
34 - 48	1.599 ***	1.702 ***	1.387
49 - 63	1.000	1.000	1.000
Region			
Quebec	1.081	0.963	1.329 *
Other	1.000	1.000	1.000
Immigration Status			
Immigrant	0.561 ***	0.615 **	0.48 **
Canadian-born	1.000	1.000	1.000
Visible Minority Status			
Yes	1.333	1.341	1.341
No	1.000	1.000	1.000
Family Characteristics			
Marital Status in 1992			
Married	1.001	1.071	0.852
Common-law	1.146	1.472 *	0.705
Divorced	0.956	0.800	1.203
Never Married	1.000	1.000	1.000
Presence of Children Aged 0 - 4 Years			
Yes	0.684 ***	0.447 ***	1.220
No	1.000	1.000	1.000
Human Capital Variables			
Education			
<11 Years of Schooling	0.685 ***	0.725	0.607 *
11 Years - High School	0.814	1.037	0.464 **
College	0.920	0.797	1.115
University	1.000	1.000	1.000
Full-Time Work Experience			
None (Less than half year)	0.910	0.941	0.846
1 - 5 Years	0.970	0.848	1.180
6 - 15 Years	0.992	0.979	1.008
>15 Years	1.000	1.000	1.000
Percent Censored	57.12	73.23	83.89
Chi-Square (score)	72.361	79.902	63.342
Degree of Freedom	15	15	15
P-value	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001

Note: Two-tailed t-test of signficance level: *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$.

We hypothesized that marriage would help men's chance of re-employment but hinder women's chance of re-employment. Our results support the first half of the hypothesis but not the second. Being in a marital union raises jobless men's chance of full-time employment by 40.8 percent, and part-time employment by 110.9 percent, in comparison with the never married. In comparison, married women have approximately equal probability of being employed full-time and part-time compared to the never married. However, the hypothesis regarding common-law unions is supported for women, who are 47.2 percent more likely to enter full-time employment relative to the never married.

There may be a selection process whereby men with characteristics positively valued in the labour force are more likely to marry and remain married. Teachman, Call and Carver (1994) hold that the positive relationship between marriage and re-employment for men involves a stronger motivation on the part of married men because of their financial responsibilities. In addition, the division of unpaid work may give married men more opportunity to return to employment. Similarly, women in cohabitating relationships would be exhibiting their greater independence by being more likely to return to the labour force.

As anticipated, our results show that the presence of young children only affects women. The women with young children are 55.3 percent less likely to leave joblessness for full-time employment, compared to women without young children. This finding is consistent with findings of other research (Cook and Beaujot, 1996; Li and Currie, 1992). It is also significant to observe that part-time employment is not affected by the pressure of young children.

Our results suggest that the effect of human capital variables on the re-employment probability is rather weak and marginal. The full-time working experience has virtually no effect on re-employment probability; and the more educated men and women are not found to have higher propensities of entering full-time employment. On the other hand, they are found to be more likely to find part-time work. The full-time and part-time employment combined model for women (model 1 in Table 3) shows that those with less than 11 years of schooling are less likely to be re-employed, while the competing-risks model (model 2 and 3) further indicates that they are mainly less likely to be re-employed part-time. For men, the combined model does not find a significant education effect, while the competing-risks model shows strong and statistically significant education effect on part-time employment.

Persons with visible minority status are not found to be disadvantaged, however immigrants are less likely to be re-employed . Immigrant men are found to be 31.6 percent less likely to be re-employed full-time, for women it is 39.5 percent, in comparison with the Canadian-born. These results contrast with the finding by Matthew (1986) that the principal applicant immigrants have substantially similar unemployment experiences as the native population. Although we are examining the jobless not the unemployed, the significant difference probably reflects the fact that immigrants have more difficulty returning

to the labour market. Finally, the data show that Quebec has a lower rate of return to full-time employment for men, but has a higher rate of transition to part-time jobs for women. These findings are also generally compatible with the observation that Quebec had a higher unemployment rate than the rest of country in 1993 (Dumas, 1994). The employment patterns in Quebec also seem to suggest that when the jobless rate is high for men, the family's economic needs may push women into the labour market. This is known as the additional worker effect.

Conclusions and Implications

Using data from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics for 1992-93, the present study has examined the impact of a number of socioeconomic and demographic variables on re-employment probabilities. Our results indicate that the most significant determining factors are age, marital status, presence of young children, as well as immigration status. After a period of joblessness, demographic and family attributes play a larger role than human capital factors as determinants of return to employment. Li and Currie (1992) reached a similar conclusion through emphasizing familial processes in accounting for gender differences in work interruptions.

Since the transition into part-time employment is dominated by women, the examination of two competing outcomes of joblessness is more useful in the study of women's labour market transition experiences. Our analyses confirm the gender segregation of part-time work in Canada, which corresponds to the complex interdependence between women's paid and unpaid work (Duffy and Pupo, 1992:73). In particular, part-time work provides flexibility to balance family, child-care and paid work. Clearly, women are carrying most of the burden of this flexibility (Davidson, 1994; Kempeneers, 1991, 1992). In *Lives of their Own*, Jones, Marden and Tepperman (1990) observe the individuation of women's life course paths. They also refer to the fragmentation of women's lives; while women are involved in more activities than men, they have less choice about when and where they will spend their time. Consequently, there is now more variation across women in their work, marital and parenting experiences, which can be interpreted as more variety, or less need to be continuously employed full-time.

One notable finding is that marriage appears no longer to be an obstacle for women's participation in paid work. This result reflects the growing labour force participation of married women. On the other hand, having young children still substantially hinders women's prospect of re-employment, especially in terms of full-time employment. Another interesting finding is that the women in common-law unions are more active in the labour market. In addition, we found that married men enjoy a quicker and higher rate of return to employment, both full-time and part-time. Clearly, family attributes, along with age, play a significant role in the return to active employment for both women and men. While human capital factors reduce the likelihood of part-time employment for persons with low education, they do not have a significant impact on the return

to full-time employment. In general, human capital factors are found to be less relevant than family attributes in the return to employment. This suggests that questions of education and re-training are less relevant than the division of paid and unpaid work in effective return to the labour market.

Unfortunately, the survey does not measure the amount of part-time work experience. Future research should consider the impact of this part-time experience on the return to part-time and full-time work. The presence of children of various ages should also be further analyzed, to determine the ages and composition of families that encourage a return to part-time instead of full-time work. Finally, it would be important to have measures of the cause of the non-employment spell, and extent of sharing of unpaid work in couples, to further specify the prospects of return to employment. At the same time, this study shows the importance of separate analyses of women and men based on the same determinants.

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