

DETERMINANTS OF PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT: LITHUANIAN EXPERIENCES IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER EU COUNTRIES

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Part-time employment is the most widely used flexible form of employment in many countries across the world. According to Eurostat, an increasing number of European people are working part-time. However, large differences existing in European Union (EU) countries raise a question as to why some EU countries have part-time employment making up about a fourth of the total employment (like in Austria) while in others it accounts for just a few percents (like in Bulgaria). This paper aims at analysing drivers of part-time employment, its advantages and drawbacks, as well as part-time employment developments in Lithuania in the context of other EU countries. In achieving the above-mentioned objective, a particular emphasis is placed on the phenomenon of involuntary part-time employment both in Lithuania and in other EU countries, and on wage influence.

Introduction

The acceleration in the globalisation of the world economy over the past decade made the demands of business increasingly complex, requiring employers to respond to customer demands both flexibly and with the most efficient use of human resources. To balance the needs of production and labour resources, in the ninth decade of the 20th century, many countries introduced flexible forms of employment.

On a company level, two types of flexibility could be identified: numerical and functional flexibility. Numerical flexibility is defined as a process through which firms react to changes in the demand for their

products/services by adjusting the amount of labour they employ. It is achieved through overtime, part-time work, variable working hours, fixed-time contracts or lay-offs. Functional flexibility means a process through which enterprises adjust to changes in the demand for their output by an internal re-organization of workplaces based on multi-skilling, multi-tasking, team-working and the involvement of workers in job design, innovation, technology and the organization of work¹. In this article we will focus on numerical flexibility, i.e. part-time employment.

Part-time employment is the most widely used flexible form of employment in many countries across the world. Eurostat data

shows that an increasing number of European people are working part-time. In 2006, the average indicator of the part-time employment rate in the EU-28 constituted 17.5%, while in 2016 this share increased to 19.5%.

A greater share of part-time workers may be regarded as a positive step forward if it means a better work-life balance for employees or if it creates more employment opportunities for those who have not yet been integrated in the labour market. However, many EU countries have been recently showing growth in involuntary part-time employment, which means that people have taken up part-time work, or reduced their working hours, as full-time alternatives have not been available. According to Eurostat data, on average 22.7% of part-timers reported to be working part-time involuntarily in 2006; in 2016, this share increased to 27.7%. Involuntary part-time employment among men, as a percentage of the total part-time employment, accounted for 37.6% in the EU-28 in 2016. In some countries this indicator was very high — for example, 80.2% in Italy, 76.4% in Greece, and 78.6% in Cyprus. Involuntary part-time employment not only reduces the efficiency of the use of human resources, but also leads to lower job satisfaction among the employees. Moreover, involuntary part-time employment, as a specific form of underemployment, is associated with particularly high poverty rates which rose in many countries during the crisis².

As mentioned, both voluntary and involuntary part-time employment is not evenly spread in the EU, with great differences seen across different EU countries. In this context, it is appropriate to analyse the spread of part-time employment, its drivers and developments of this form of employment in different EU countries.

Furthermore, having analysed the scientific literature in the context of determinants of part-time employment³, we have seen that many authors insufficiently emphasise

the influence of wages on people's decisions about working part-time and on social implications of such work. Therefore, these elements are more broadly discussed in the paper, in particular with a view to Lithuanian experiences.

The objective of the paper is to analyse drivers of part-time employment, its advantages and drawbacks, as well as part-time employment development trends in Lithuania in the context of other EU countries. In achieving the above-mentioned objective, a special emphasis is placed on the phenomenon of involuntary part-time employment both in Lithuania and in other EU countries, and on wage influence.

Methods applied in the paper include the analysis of scientific literature, comparative analysis and quantitative analysis methods (correlation analysis, description of statistical data). The sources of analysis were data from the Statistics Lithuania and Eurostat data.

The analysis and conclusions presented in the article could be of benefit to professionals working in the fields of social policy and labour relations.

Advantages and drawbacks of part-time work

The International Labour Organization (ILO) Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175), defines part-time work as hours of work that are shorter than those for comparable full-time work (in the country, sector, and occupation). However, it should be noted that there is no internationally accepted definition of the minimum number of hours per week that must be worked for a job to be considered full-time, the dividing line is generally drawn on the basis of rules laid down by each country individually⁴. This complicates the international comparison of the countries.

The scientific literature identifies two broad categories of part-time workers: those who perform part-time work because of constraints

originating from the demand side of the labour market, and those who work part-time for reasons related to labour supply⁵. In other words, there are voluntary part-time workers who prefer to work part-time for non-economic reasons. Such reasons may include medical conditions, child-care needs, other family or personal obligations, school or training, and retirement. Involuntary part-time workers are the part-time workers who prefer full-time work but they are facing business slack or unfavourable conditions that prompt employers to cut back hours, or unable to find full-time employment⁶.

In terms of advantages of part-time work, from an economic policy perspective, the promotion of part-time work may be an important measure through which the flexibility of labour markets can be increased. On the labour demand side, it may allow employers to adjust hours worked to cyclical conditions more easily, facilitating adjustment of production and labour costs. On the labour supply side, part-time work may increase the labour market choices open to individuals and may draw people into the labour market that were previously unwilling or unable to work⁷. According to Sandor⁸, benefits of part-time work include a positive effect on employment rates, disproportionately increasing female labour market participation, flexibility of employer resources, and an improved work–life balance.

However, part-time work has its drawbacks. Part-time workers may be subject to lower wages, be less likely to receive fringe benefits and face reduced chances for promotion⁹. Some studies also show that part-time work can be correlated with worse overall health¹⁰. Part-time workers tend to have less job security than full-time workers, whether measured objectively (by whether they have a permanent contract) or subjectively (by whether they feel that their job is secure)¹¹. In 2012, the research carried out by the European Foundation revealed that a part-timer

often have to make with poorer working conditions, reduced opportunities for care advancement compared to those working full-time, and this has negative consequences not only of employees' quality of life, but on the whole national economy as well¹².

Involuntary part-time employment has particularly adverse effects for employees. The research shows that involuntary part-time workers' experiences of their job quality are weaker with respect to core job quality indicators such as training possibilities, participation in employer-funded training, career possibilities, possibilities to learn and grow at work, job insecurity, and job autonomy¹³. According to Oishi et al.¹⁴, part-time work negatively affected job satisfaction, and the effect became stronger if the person chose to work part-time involuntarily.

Despite the aforementioned disadvantages, part-time employment is probably going to grow in many European and other countries of the world. This will be determined by enhanced employers' ability to utilise part-time work. Advances in monitoring technology have given firms accurate and detailed information about demand patterns. In the meantime, new scheduling technologies enable employers to schedule part-time work more efficiently and at lower cost. Both of these developments should facilitate the use and allocation of part-time labour¹⁵.

Determinants of part-time employment

The extent of part-time work varies considerably between EU countries. According to Eurostat data, 49.7% of the Dutch workforce worked part-time in 2016 (with around 76.4% of female workers on part-time schedules). Part-time working is also more common in Denmark (26.4%), the UK (25.2%), Belgium (24.7%) and Ireland (21.9%). On the other hand, part-time employment rates in Bulgaria and Hungary in 2016 barely reached 2.0% and 4.8%, respectively.

The analysis of the scientific literature has shown that part-time work is largely determined by the following factors¹⁶:

- economic cycles;
- labour market institutions and policies;
- other structural variables.

According to Buddelmeyer et al.¹⁷, business cycles affect movements in the part-time employment rate in the short to medium term. The rate of part-time employment usually rises during downturns as employers may offer part-time employment as a way to adjust hours worked over the cycle. This enables employees in place to avoid dismissal and job seekers to avoid long-term unemployment. Similar conclusions were drawn by Valletta et al.¹⁸ The researchers claimed that the share of part-time workers is majorly driven by economic cyclical component, rising in recessions and falling in recoveries.

The analysis of the scientific literature has revealed the following factors having the greatest impact on the spread of part-time employment in a country¹⁹:

- **Regulations on part-time work** (statutory or collectively bargained) have a significant impact on part-time work. For example, statutory regulations may have direct effects on part-time work when the development of this form of employment is subject to certain limitations. Likewise, part-time employment may be influenced through wage regulation, the social protection system or the tax and benefit system, etc.
- **The tax system** may also influence part-time employment rates in a country. High income tax, which is not differentiated according to the level of income, may reduce incentives to work part-time, as a large part of income goes for taxes²⁰.
- **Availability of high quality childcare facilities.** Surveys have shown that

availability of better and more affordable childcare facilities encourage parents to work full-time. On the other hand, if childcare services are expensive, one of the parents usually has to reduce the number of working hours in order to take care of the child(ren)²¹.

Part-time employment rates are also strongly influenced by other structural variables, such as women participation in the labour market, the number of population aged 15–24, fertility rates, etc.

In our opinion, the analysis of the above-mentioned determinants of part-time employment more closely reflects the labour market situation in prosperous countries with minimum monthly wages (MMW) exceeding the country's minimum subsistence level by two or more times. Many of the EU-15 countries fall within this category. However, in low income countries, with MMW close to the minimum subsistence level, part-time employment is attractive only for a narrow segment with high labour income. Therefore, while agreeing to the factors promoting part-time employment identified by Buddelmeyer et al.²² and other authors, we have to note that wage level is one of the most important factors. Support for this statement can be found in the third section which presents the results of the correlation analysis between part-time work and MMW in EU countries. Insufficient emphasis on the influence of wage rates on part-time employment distorts the perception of the spread of part-time employment across different countries and affects the management of this form of employment. This is in particular relevant with regard to Central and Eastern Europe. In order to develop part-time employment in this European region, it is appropriate to ensure additional financial guarantees or other conditions for part-time workers to offset the financial unattractiveness of part-time jobs.

Trends of part-time employment in Lithuania in the context of other EU countries

According to Eurostat data, part-time employment accounts for quite a small portion in Lithuania. In 2016, there were 94 thousand part-time workers in Lithuania accounting for 7.1% of the total employment (19.5% in the EU-28) (Table 1).

Eurostat data shows that in 2016 the main reasons for part-time employment in Lithuania were as follows: could not find a full-time job (i.e. involuntary part-time work) — 31.6%; other family or personal responsibilities — 13.1%; in education or training — 11.8%; own illness or disability — 8.7%; other reasons — 32.6%. When we talk about voluntary part-time employment, we may notice that the reasons for working part-time are likely to differ markedly between genders, with men generally doing so because they are in training and women due to family obligations²³.

The low number of part-timers in Lithuania is also determined, on the one hand, by low interest among employers in hiring employees for part-time jobs (due to administrative costs which, according to employers, are higher for part-time jobs) and, on the other hand, by low wages which deter employees from part-time work²⁴. According to the Statistics Lithuania (SL), average gross wage of part-time workers was EUR 322.8 per month in the 2Q 2017, being by 2.5 times lower than median monthly gross wage for full-time jobs (EUR 830.0). As mentioned in the second section, low income can be said to be one of the key reasons of reluctance to work

part-time. However, one Lithuania-specific aspect should be also mentioned in this context: in our country, part-time job is usually not the only job held by people (medical staff, scientists/researchers, teachers, accountants, social workers, etc.) and this is also typical in other Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. On the other hand, this form of employment often has to do with shadow jobs covering employment relationships, i.e. employees are formally admitted to part-time jobs but in reality work full-time and are partly paid envelope wages (which, in turn, means lower social contributions and other taxes)²⁵. This phenomenon is also common in other EU countries²⁶.

Most of the research carried out in EU countries indicates that part-time work is a predominantly female phenomenon²⁷. However, it is not really true for Lithuania. According to Eurostat data, the proportion of female part-timers is slightly higher compared to men: in 2016, Lithuanian female and male part-time workers accounted for 8.8% and 5.4%, respectively. If we compare Lithuanian data to the EU-28 average, we can see that in 2016 the proportion of male part-time workers in Lithuania was insignificantly lower than the average in the EU-28 (8.9%), while the proportion of female part-timers was roughly by 3.6 times lower compared to the average in the EU-28 (31.9%).

Such a situation in Lithuania could be explained by favourable parental leave conditions (in accordance with the legislation currently in force in Lithuania, special leave may be granted to one of the parents²⁸ until the child reaches the age of three years)

Table 1. Part-time workers in Lithuania (aged 15–64) in 2006–2016 (thous.)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
LT	10.0	8.6	6.5	7.9	7.8	8.3	8.9	8.4	8.6	7.6	7.1
EU-28	17.5	17.5	17.5	18.0	18.5	18.8	19.2	19.6	19.6	19.6	19.5

Source: Eurostat, [lfsa_egaed]

and fairly well developed childcare facilities for pre-school-age children in the country. In addition, relatively low wages in the country also contribute to the situation in that women tend to work full-time or not to work at all, because part-time work only marginally increases family income.

As mentioned in the second section, the rate of part-time employment strongly depends on economic cycles. The analysis of part-time dynamics in the country shows that the rate of part-time employment was growing during the period of economic downturn (quite steady growth has been observed for the whole period 2008–2012). During the mentioned period, the rate of part-time employment increased from 6.5% to 8.9% (Table 1). Similar trends have been observed in the post-crisis period in the EU-28.

The research also shows that quite often part-time work is used as a tool to raise the labour market participation rate of disadvantaged groups in the labour market such as women with young children, older and younger workers, or individuals with health problems²⁹. Eurostat data shows that in Lithuania part-time work is the most widespread among older workers (aged 65 and

older). In 2016, the share of older employees working part-time in Lithuania constituted 35.3% (EU-28 — 57.3%) (Table 2). The rate of part-time work among individuals aged 15–24 was also slightly above the country's average accounting for 11.5% in Lithuania in 2016.

It may be also noted that unlike in EU-28 countries where the rate of part-time employment increased in all age groups in the period 2006–2016, in Lithuania this indicator grew only among young employees (aged 15–24). In many OECD countries there has been an increase in part-time work among older workers associated with measures to prolong working life, such as flexible retirement schemes³⁰. In Lithuania, people in pre-retirement age are not interested in working part-time to facilitate their smooth exit from the labour market. Individuals working part-time in the age group of 55–64 in Lithuania constituted 9.6% in 2016 (in EU-28 — 22.0%). Such a situation is primarily due to low wages affecting the amount of their future pensions (in September 2017, the average pension was EUR 274.02 in Lithuania). In addition, even though the Labour Code stipulates that part-time work entails no restrictions when

Table 2. Part-time employment as a percentage of the total employment in different age groups in Lithuania and the EU-28 in 2006–2016 (%)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
15–24											
LT	9.5	10.4	10.2	12.1	11.4	12.9	15.4	16.0	13.7	11.4	11.5
EU-28	25.3	25.5	26.2	27.8	29.2	29.8	31.2	32.0	31.8	32.2	32.4
25–64											
LT	10.0	8.4	6.1	7.6	7.5	8.0	8.4	7.7	8.1	7.3	6.8
EU-28	16.5	16.5	16.5	17.0	17.5	17.7	18.0	18.4	18.5	18.4	18.3
65+											
LT	38.4	33.1	19.8	23.8	30.3	34.4	33.1	36.8	32.0	35.0	35.3
EU-28	52.8	52.2	53.0	53.9	55.2	56.9	57.5	57.6	57.9	57.4	57.3

Source: Eurostat, [lfsa_eppgacob]

Table 3. Involuntary part-time work as a percentage of the total part-time work in Lithuania and the EU-28 in 2006–2016 (%)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total											
LT	36.5	28.1	22.4	31.5	39.2	37.5	33.0	32.7	31.3	31.9	31.6
EU-28	22.7	22.4	25.6	25.6	26.9	26.3	27.7	29.3	29.6	29.1	27.7
Males											
LT	41.6	28.3	20.4	32.8	38.7	41.0	32.3	32.7	32.6	26.6	32.0
EU-28	31.1	30.3	32.7	34.4	36.1	36.5	38.5	39.9	40.2	39.9	37.6
Females											
LT	33.0	28.0	23.6	30.7	39.5	35.3	33.5	32.7	30.5	34.7	31.4
EU-28	20.4	20.2	23.6	23.2	24.3	23.3	24.5	26.0	26.3	25.7	24.6

Source: Eurostat, [lfsa_eggai]

calculating the length of service, pursuant to the legislation currently in force one year of service shall be recorded only if the person earns twelve or more minimum monthly wages (MMW) a year. If the person's annual earnings are lower, a proportionally shorter length of service shall be recorded. In January 2018, MMW in Lithuania was EUR 400. As it was mentioned above, in the 2Q 2017, the average gross wage of part-time workers in Lithuania was lower than the MMW.

As the research shows³¹, significant increases in the extent of involuntary part-time work are typical in the periods of economic downturn. This trend can be clearly seen in Lithuania, too. During the post-crisis period, in 2010 as compared to 2008, the rate of involuntary part-time work in Lithuania increased by 16.8 percentage points (from 22.4% to 39.2%) (Table 3).

This can be explained by a dramatic increase in the rate of unemployment in the country during the crisis. According to Budelmeyer et al.³², when unemployment rises, people may be more willing to accept a part-time job while preferring a full-time job.

Looking at the Lithuania's situation in the context of EU countries, we can see that

Lithuania falls within a group of countries with low rates of part-time work. In 2016, the smallest share of part-time workers as a percentage of the total employment was in Bulgaria and Croatia (constituted 2.0% and 5.6%, respectively), the largest share — in the Netherlands and Austria (49.7% and 27.8%, respectively). In general, we may see large differences in the rate of part-time employment in two groups of countries — Eastern and Western Europe. Part-time employment is widespread in Western Europe, but quite scarce in Eastern Europe. Probably one of the main reasons to explain this is differences in wage levels between Eastern and Western European countries. Table 4 shows that countries with high minimum wages (and, accordingly, considerably higher average wages) also have high part-time employment rates and vice versa — countries with low minimum wages demonstrate low part-time employment rates. That conclusion is also supported by the correlation analysis carried out. The correlation between the latter two indicators, i.e. part-time employment as a percentage of the total employment (%) and minimum wages (EUR), is statistically significant. Spearman's correlation

Table 4. Part-time employment and minimum wages in EU countries

Country	Part-time employment as a percentage of the total employment, %			Minimum wages, EUR		
	2005	2010	2015	2005	2010	2015
Belgium	21.7	23.7	24.3	1210	1387.5	1501.82
Bulgaria	1.9	2.2	2.2	76.69	122.71	184.07
Czech Republic	4.4	5.1	5.3	235.85	302.19	331.71
Germany	23.4	25.6	26.8	:	:	1440
Estonia	6.8	9.8	9.5	171.92	278.02	390
Ireland	:	22.2	22.2	1183	1461.85	1461.85
Greece	4.8	6.3	9.4	667.68	862.82	683.76
Spain	12	12.9	15.6	598.5	738.85	756.7
France	17.1	17.6	18.4	1286.09	1343.77	1457.52
Croatia	7.8	7	6	:	385.48	395.61
Latvia	7.6	9.4	7.2	114.63	253.77	360
Lithuania	6.9	7.8	7.6	144.81	231.7	300
Luxembourg	17.4	17.5	18.5	1466.77	1682.76	1922.96
Hungary	3.9	5.5	5.7	231.74	271.8	332.76
Malta	9	11.6	14.5	555.06	659.92	720.46
Netherlands	45.7	48.3	50	1264.8	1407.6	1501.8
Poland	9.8	7.7	6.8	207.86	320.87	409.53
Portugal	8.2	8.5	9.8	437.15	554.17	589.17
Romania	9.2	9.9	8.8	78.7	141.63	217.5
Slovenia	7.8	10.3	10.1	490.07	597.43	790.73
Slovakia	2.4	3.8	5.8	167.76	307.7	380
United Kingdom	24.2	25.7	25.2	1134.67	1076.46	1378.87

Source: Eurostat, [lfsa_eppgacob], [learn_mw_cur]

coefficient for the 2005, 2010, and 2015 data fluctuates from $r = 0.695$ (2005) up to $r = 0.879$ (2015); correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This is indicative of a statistically significant, linear, strong positive relationship: part-time employment rates increase along with increases in minimum wage levels. It can be therefore con-

cluded that the level of wages (minimum and average) prevalent in the countries is one of important determinants of part-time employment.

To sum up the material contained in the paper, it could be argued that countries with lower wages have considerably lower possibilities to apply different forms of part-time

employment or application of such forms has adverse social effects that are frequently underemphasised. In modern societies, part-time employment is an important and useful tool for reconciling work and family responsibilities, developing employment among disabled people, youth and older population, and ensuring higher employment levels in cyclical economic periods unfavourable for the labour market. However, whilst developing various forms of part-time employment, it is necessary to ensure that part-time employment would not impair quality of life what is frequently inherent in the CEE labour markets. People have fewer opportunities to effectively balance their work responsibilities with family or personal needs unless they are financially interested in working part-time. Those with certain limitations (e.g. physical, health-related) have fewer opportunities to integrate into the labour market and are more dependent on social benefits. All of these factors reduce job satisfaction among population/employees and make the labour market of the country concerned less attractive.

Conclusions

Economic globalization and development of information technologies has had a significant impact on the utilisation of labour resources as well as on organisation of work in many countries over the past decade. Part-time employment may serve as an efficient tool for achieving a balance between capital and labour. It can help to reconcile work and family responsibilities, to facilitate the employment among disabled people, youth and older population, and to adjust hours worked to cyclical conditions more easily.

However, the scientific literature increasingly emphasises that part-time work has its drawbacks. Part-time workers may be subject to lower wages, be less likely to receive fringe benefits and face reduced chances for promotion³³. Part-time workers tend to have less job security than full-time workers, often have to

make do with poorer working conditions and have reduced opportunities for care advancement. Involuntary part-time employment has particularly adverse effects for employees when they have to work part-time being unable to find full-time jobs.

The analysis of Lithuanian experiences in the context of other EU countries shows that Lithuania falls within a group of CEE countries with low rates of part-time work. In 2016, individuals working part-time constituted around 7.1% of the total employment in Lithuania. The analysis also suggests that low wages in CEE countries is one of the key reasons deterring employees from part-time work. The Spearman's correlation coefficient for the 2005, 2010 and 2015 data in the EU countries revealed a statistically significant, linear, strong positive relationship between part-time employment and MMW: part-time employment rates increase along with increases in minimum wage levels. The spread of part-time employment in Lithuania is also influenced by economic cycles and participation rate of disadvantaged groups in the labour market such as older and younger workers.

Despite disadvantages of part-time work, this form of employment is expected to grow in many European countries. However, whilst developing different forms of part-time employment, it is necessary to secure that part-time employment would not impair quality of life what is frequently inherent in the CEE labour markets. In order to develop part-time employment in this region, it is appropriate to ensure additional financial guarantees or other conditions for part-timers to offset the financial unattractiveness of part-time jobs.

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NEPILNA DARBA LAIKA NODARBINĀTĪBAS NOTEICOŠIE FAKTORI: LIETUVAS PIEREDZE CITU ES VALSTU KONTEKSTĀ

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Atslēgvārdi: *nepilna darba laika nodarbinātība, darba laiks, piespiedu nepilna darba laika nodarbinātība*

Nepilna darba laika nodarbinātība ir visplašāk izmantotais un viselastīgākais nodarbinātības veids daudzās pasaules valstīs. Saskaņā ar *Eurostat* datiem, Eiropā arvien vairāk cilvēku strādā nepilna laika darbu. Tomēr starp Eiropas Savienības (ES) valstīm pastāvošās lielas atšķirības rada jautājumu: kāpēc dažās ES valstīs nepilna laika darbs ir ceturtdaļa no kopējā nodarbinātības apjoma (piem., Austrijā), savukārt citās tas ir tikai daži procenti (piem., Bulgārijā). Rakstā analizēti faktori, kas veicina cilvēku iesaistīšanos nepilna laika darbā, tā priekšrocības un trūkumi, kā arī nepilna darba laika nodarbinātības jautājumi Lietuvā citu ES valstu kontekstā. Īpašs uzsvars ir uz piespiedu nepilna laika nodarbinātību gan Lietuvā, gan ES valstīs, kā arī uz darba samaksas ietekmi.