
Labour Force Statistics ♦ November 2000

HIGHLIGHTS

- **The BC seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined to 7.0 per cent in November from 7.7 per cent in October.** The estimated number of unemployed persons fell by 15,600 while employment rose by 4,300, resulting in a fall in the size of the labour force.
- **Men aged 25+ accounted for all of the gains in employment in November.** The BC seasonally adjusted youth unemployment rate fell to 14.2 per cent in November from 15.7 per cent in October. Men and women aged 25+ had unemployment rates of 5.7 and 5.6 per cent, respectively.
- **Seasonally adjusted average full-time employment in BC for the first eleven months of 2000 is up by 3.6 per cent from the same period in 1999.** Part-time employment is down by 2.6 per cent for the same comparison period.
- **Average employment levels for January to November 2000 compared to the same period in 1999 show that BC led employment growth amongst the Western Provinces.** Ontario and Quebec saw the fastest growth, and the Atlantic provinces combined saw the slowest growth over the same period.

Selected Statistics (SA)*	Nov. 2000	Oct. 2000	Nov. 1999
B.C. Unemployment Rate	7.0%	7.7%	8.0%
Canada Unemployment Rate	6.9%	6.9%	6.9%
B.C. Help Wanted Index (1996=100)	154.0	151.0	140.0
B.C. Employment - Monthly Change	0.2%	0.3%	-
B.C. Labour Force - Monthly Change	-0.5%	0.2%	-
B.C. Participation Rate	64.9%	65.3%	64.9%

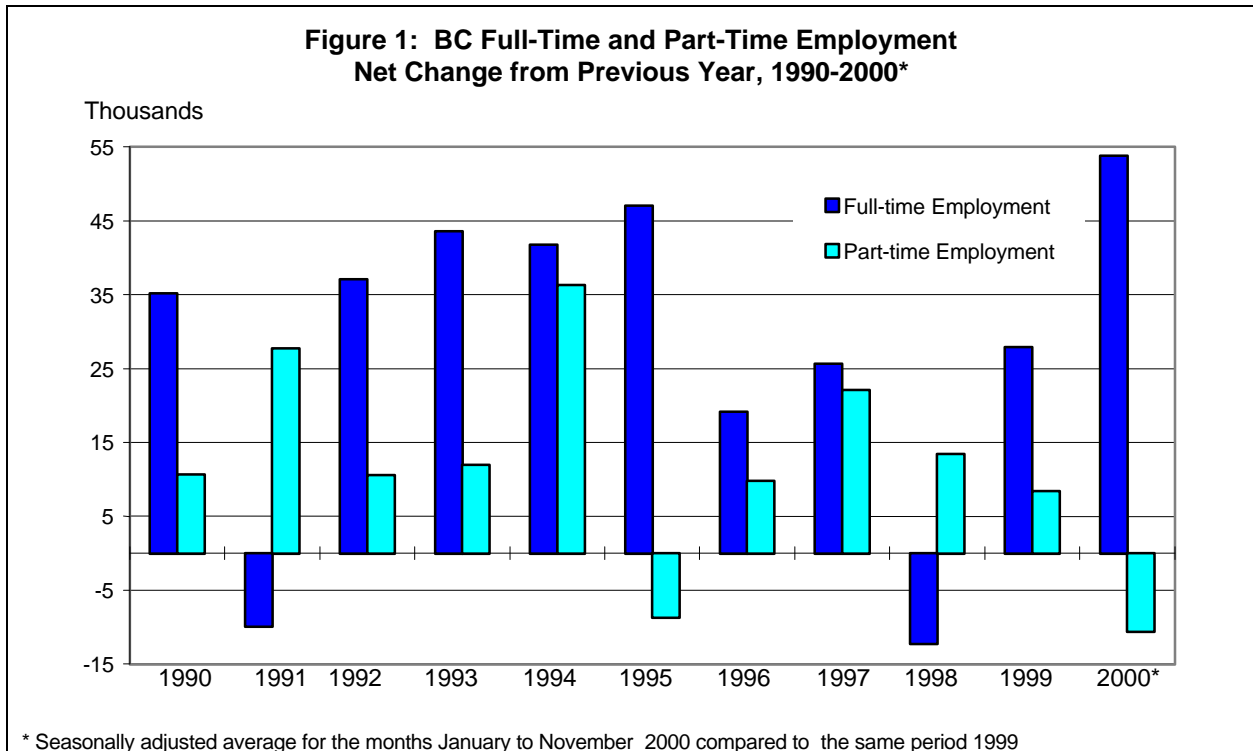
* Unless otherwise indicated, all labour force variables are seasonally adjusted.

Labour Force Statistics is a joint compilation and review by BC STATS of the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations and the Youth and Labour Market Services Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology of the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. For more information, call BC STATS (250) 387-0327 or YLMS (250) 952-6776.

Trends in Full-time and Part-time Employment in British Columbia

Introduction . . . Employment is often thought of as either full or part-time. These labels simply measure hours of work per week. For purposes of measurement, Statistics Canada classifies those who normally work 30 hours or more per week at their main job as full-time workers, with those less than 30 hours as part-time workers. Over the past twenty years in BC part-time employment has grown faster than full-time work, but both have grown.

As noted in Figure 1, the majority of the net gain in employment in BC in 1999 came from additions to full-time employment. Based on the first eleven months of 2000, the net gain in employment this year is poised to see a greater net gain than any year during the 1990s. The net gains in full-time employment in 1999 and 2000 are the strongest consecutive gains seen since 1994 and 1995.



Full and Part-time Levels and Rate of Growth

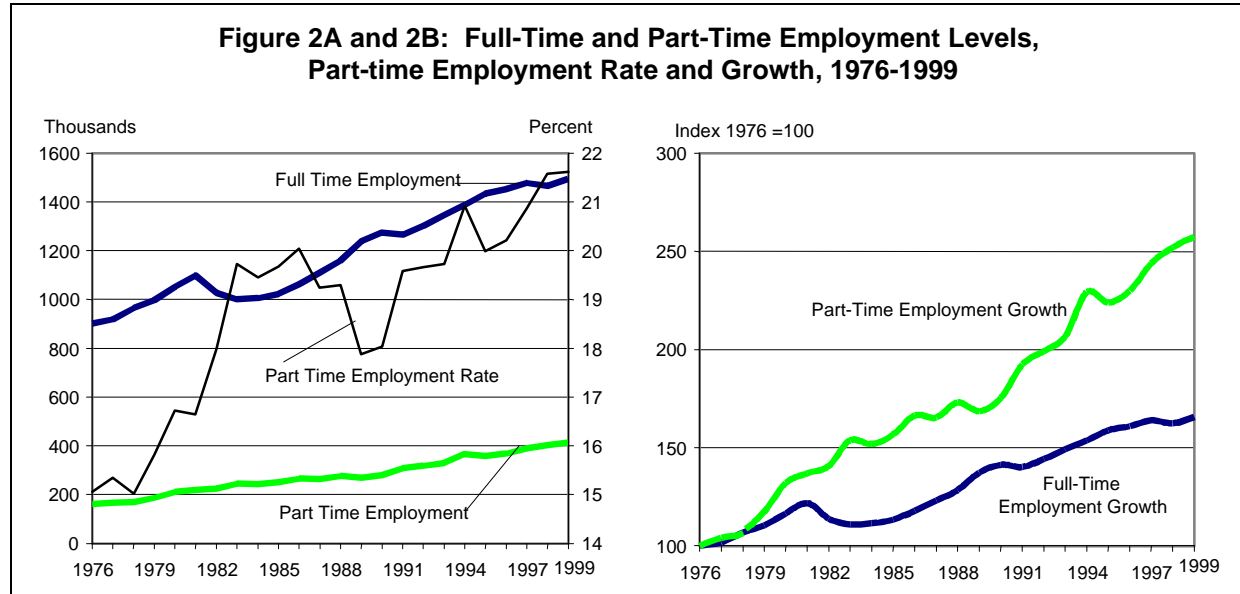
. . . Figure 2A shows that while both full-time and part-time work have been generally increasing since 1976 in BC, full-time employment still outnumbers part-time workers by almost 4 to 1 in 1999. Full-time employment can be shown to be more sensitive to downturns during recessionary periods such as 1981/82. In a similar fashion, though to a lesser extent, part-time employment tends to grow stronger during recessionary periods or years with weaker economic growth.

The share of all employment that is part-time, sometimes called the part-time employment rate, is also displayed in Figure 2A (with the scale on the right hand axis). Although full-time employment has been growing, part-time employment has seen faster growth. The part-time employment rate has been ratcheting upwards in times of weaker economic activity then settling back down in years of stronger economic growth (e.g. 1989/90, 1995), but at a higher level than subsequent low points. This suggests there has been a structural increase in

the part-time employment rate in BC once the impacts of business cycles are removed.

During the past 20 years, part-time employment has grown about twice as fast as full-time employment. This is clearly apparent in the

Figure 2B, which shows that considerable growth in part-time employment has taken place in the 1990s. However owing to its greater size in overall employment, the full-time component generally continues to produce most of the absolute net gains in paid work.

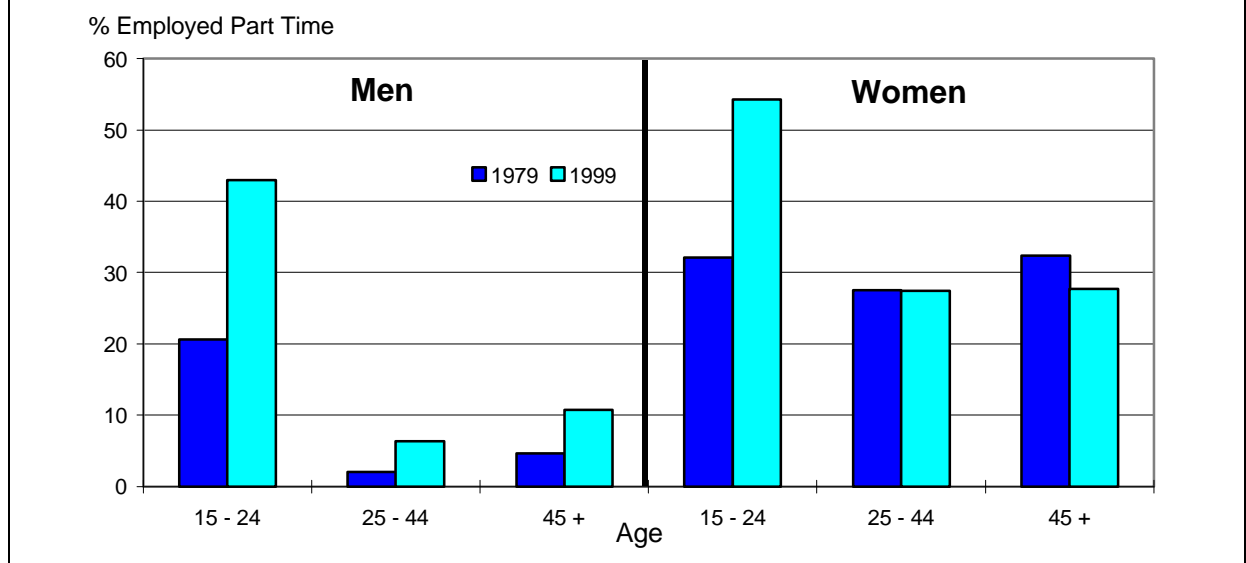


Full and Part-time Employment for Men and Women . . . The share of all employment in B.C. that is part-time has increased from 15 per cent in 1976 to 22 per cent in 1999. Yet, as shown in Figure 3, there are considerable differences in part-time employment rates for men and women depending on age. Only women aged 45 and older saw a decline in their part-time employment rate between 1979 and 1999. They, like other women, have a much higher incidence of part-time employment than men of the same age group. Men aged 25 and older continue to have a part-time employment rate of below 11 per cent, compared to almost 30 per cent for women aged 25 and older. Figure 3 also shows that Youths (aged 15 to 24) consistently have the highest part-time employment rates, and their rates have grown faster than that of any other age cohort. Part-time employment rates for male and

female youths were 21 and 32 per cent respectively in 1979. These rates grew to 43 and 54 per cent respectively by 1999. Much of the rise in part-time employment rates for youth is due to their large increase in post-secondary participation.

Against these changes in part-time employment rates, there has also been strong growth for those working more full-time hours. This has been referred to as a polarization of work hours. For example, in terms of actual hours worked, the share of all employment in BC accounted for by those working 50 hours or more per week and those who worked between 1 to 29 hours per week, has risen from 28% in 1976 to 45% in 1999.

Figure 3: BC Part-Time Employment as a Share of Total Employment, by Gender and Age, 1979 and 1999



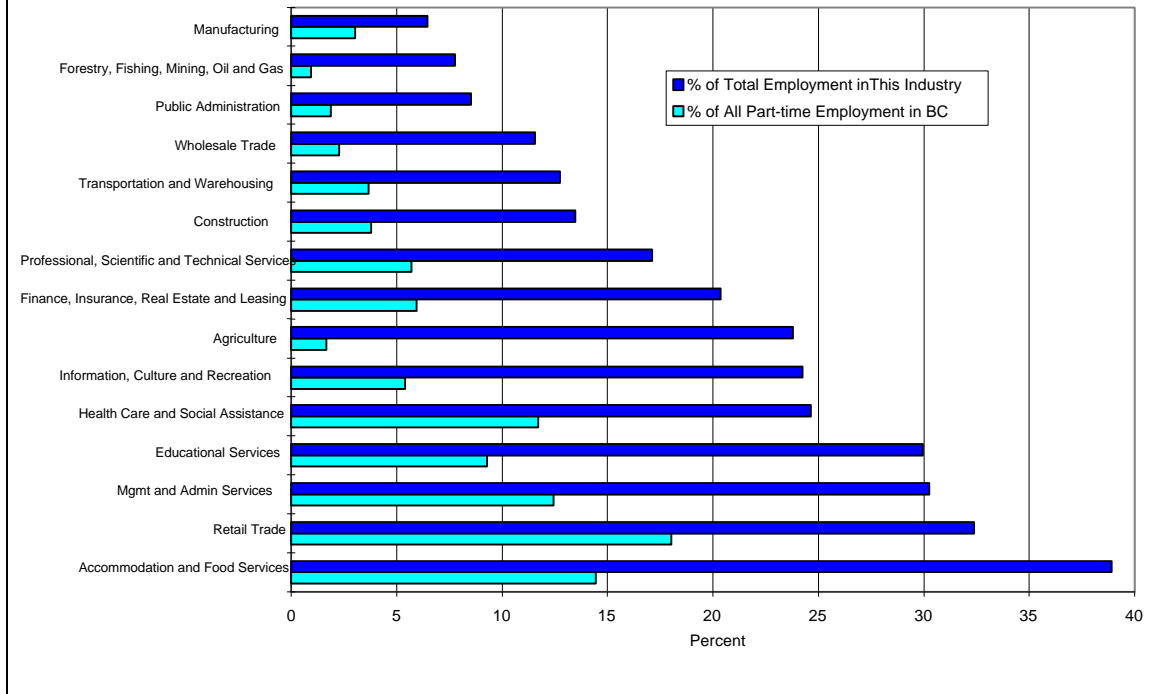
Full and Part-time employment by industry

Another dimension of examining full and part-time employment is to look at industry sectors. It is often believed that service sector employment is much more predominantly made up of part-time workers relative to the goods sector. Yet, as displayed in Figure 4, this is not always the case. For example, there was a higher proportion of part-time employment in Agriculture than in Wholesale Trade or Professional Scientific and Technical Services in 1999. However, Agriculture is the only industry in the goods sector that had a part-time employment rate of over 20 per cent.

The two industries at the bottom of Figure 4 (Retail Trade and Accommodation, Food and Beverage Services), saw the highest proportions of part-time employment in 1999. Together they accounted for nearly one-third all part-time employment in BC in 1999.

The growth in part-time work overall relates closely to growth in service sector employment, which has grown faster than goods sector employment. In the large and growing traditional service sectors like retail trade and accommodation and food, uneven levels of demand provide a strong incentive for utilizing part-timers. Such sectors also tend to employ a higher proportion of youth workers, so youth of both sexes tend to have higher than average part-time employment rates. Further, since goods sector employment has been dominated by men, weaker employment growth in that sector have contributed to a higher part-time employment rate for men. For women, who are more concentrated in services, part-time employment rates have stayed relatively constant, though still at a much higher level than for men.

**Figure 4: BC Part-time Employment by Industry in 1999,
% of Industry Employment and % of Total BC Part-time Employment**



Reasons for Working Part Time . . . The rise in part-time employment has in some cases been voluntary to accommodate individual circumstances such as participation in full-time education or family responsibilities. In other cases it is involuntary in that workers are working part-time because they are unable to find full-time work.

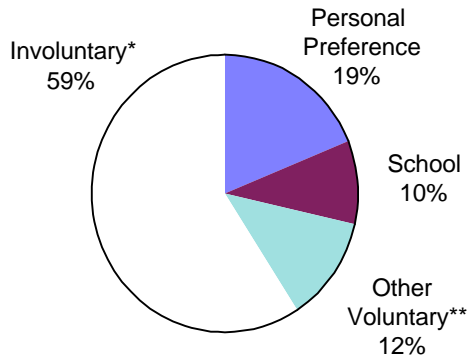
Figure 5 shows some interesting differences between the reasons core aged men and women work part time. To partially control for younger persons who are more likely to be engaged in schooling, Figure 5 and this section refers to only part-time workers aged 25 to 54. Men represent less than one quarter of all part-time workers. The majority of them (59 per cent) state that they would prefer to work full-time. These workers are considered to be working part-time *involuntarily*. Women who would prefer full-time work represented only 26 per cent of all women who work part-time. However, because there are so many more women who work part-

time, there are also many more women working part-time involuntarily than men.

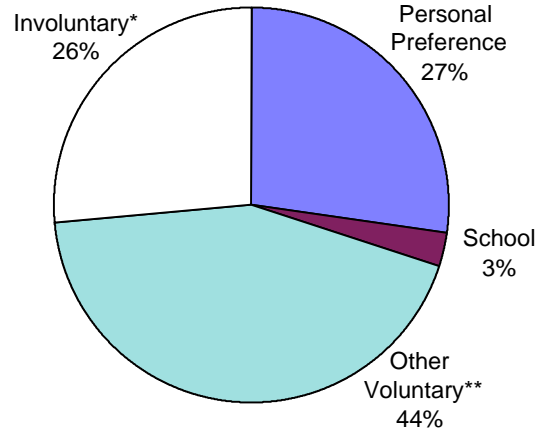
There are a variety of reasons why men and women choose to work part-time *voluntarily*. A large number of both men and women prefer to work part-time by personal preference (19 and 21 per cent respectively). Another reason cited for working part-time is so that individuals may attend school. Although nearly an equal number of men and women work part-time while attending school, this represents 10 per cent of men who work part-time, but only 3 per cent of women. Other reasons for choosing to work part-time include personal illness or disability, caring for children and other personal or family responsibilities such as attending to an elderly relative. This last group of “other reasons” represents the main reason why women work part time. Fully 77,000 (44 per cent) of women cited this reason for working part-time compared to 6,000 (12 per cent) of men.

Figure 5: Reasons for Part-time Employment for Men and Women Aged 25 to 54 in BC, 1999.

Men Part-time (Total 49,900)



Women Part-time (Total 177,100)



* Includes persons who looked for full-time work in the previous month but were unsuccessful due to economic conditions or other reasons. Also included are persons who would prefer to be working full-time but did not look for full-time work because of their perceptions of unfavourable economic conditions or for other reasons.

** Includes persons who chose to work part-time for health reasons, to care for children, or other personal or family responsibilities.

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