

PART-TIME WORK AND WORKERS IN
THE UNITED STATES:
CORRELATES AND POLICY ISSUES*

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a broad overview of some important correlates of part-time work and workers in the United States. The analysis is based on data from the General Social Survey, a multitopic survey representative of the U.S. population that has been conducted almost every year since 1972 by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center.

The first section of the paper compares the work motivations and job rewards of part-time and full-time workers. Part-timers and full-timers have very similar work motivations. Work appears to be a central life interest for part-time as well as full-time workers, and members of both groups place considerable importance on having a job that provides security, opportunities for advancement, and interesting work. However, part-time workers receive fewer job rewards than full-time workers. This difference is especially pronounced with regard to earnings and fringe benefits, though men who work part-time are also disadvantaged with regard to autonomy and advancement opportunities. Part-timers are equally as likely as full-timers to desire union representation and to be committed to their organizations.

The second section of the paper discusses some of the policy-related, regulatory issues raised by these differences between part-time and full-time workers.

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Introduction

Employment relations in the United States are changing. During the past fifteen years, U.S. work organizations have moved away from the traditional model of employment in which most employees (especially males) were connected to their employers on a full-time, relatively permanent basis. Employees were expected to be loyal and committed to their employers, who reciprocated by granting them job security and long-term employment. Now, jobs are becoming less permanent and secure. Employment relations are more "contingent," which has been broadly defined as the situation where "...an individual does not have an explicit or implicit contract for long-term employment or one in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a nonsystematic manner" (Polivka and Nardone, 1989: p. 11).

Contingent employment relations constitute a sizeable portion of the U.S. labor force. A frequently cited estimate is that between 25-30 percent of all employees in the U.S. civilian labor force (between 29.9 million and 36.6 million workers) in 1988 were either part-timers, temporary workers, contract employees and/or independent consultants (Belous, 1989a). However, these estimates are only approximations, since government statistics are not generally collected for contingent workers as a group (Appelbaum, 1992; Callaghan and Hartmann, 1991).¹ Estimating the size of the contingent workforce is complicated by the

¹ A supplement to the February, 1995 Current Population Survey will collect information on the various types of contingent work. These data will provide needed

existence of overlap among categories (e.g., Callaghan and Hartmann, 1991:7, report a Bureau of Labor Statistics' estimate that 40% of temporary workers also work part-time) and by the inappropriate classification of all part-time and self-employed persons as "contingent," even though many of them are in stable, long-term work arrangements. In any event, it is generally agreed that the rate of growth in temporary and part-time workers exceeded the growth rate of the entire U.S. labor force during the 1980s (see Belous, 1989b; Pollack and Bernstein, 1986).

This paper focuses on **part-time** employment, the most common form of contingent work in the United States, comprising more than half of the contingent workforce. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 19.6 million workers worked fewer than 35 hours in 1990, representing 18% of the total U.S. civilian workforce of 108.7 million (Callaghan and Hartmann, 1991).² In 1991, two out of every three U.S. work organizations employed part-time workers (see Kalleberg and Schmidt, forthcoming). The percentage of part-timers has grown steadily since 1957, when 12.1% of the civilian labor force worked part time. As Figure 1 shows, most of the growth of part-time employment during the past two decades has

estimates of part-time, temporary, and contracted work for the U.S. labor force.

² This is undoubtedly an underestimate of part-time employment since, for example, a person with two part-time jobs at 18 hours each would be counted as working full-time. About 6% of men and women in 1994 held more than one job (Mishel and Bernstein, 1994, Table 4.19). An important question for research, which we are unable to address here, is the extent to which various categories of persons have more than one part-time job.

occurred among the "involuntary" part-time workers.³ In 1990, 4.5% of all workers were involuntary part-timers, compared to the 13.6% of all workers who worked part-time voluntarily (Tilly, 1990).

-- FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE --

The expansion of contingent employment relations in the United States has brought with it new policy issues and challenges. Laws and institutions intended to provide worker protections were established mainly for full-time, permanent employees. These need to be changed to accommodate the distinctive features of part-time and other forms of contingent work. Unfortunately, data on contingent work are scarce and often inadequate for policy discussions. Most of our information about contingent work comes from often non-representative case studies of particular occupations, industries, and/or organizations, or from a small number of labor force surveys that focus almost exclusively on the economic aspects of such work. We know relatively little about non-economic correlates of part-time jobs, nor do we know much about why people work part-time. This paucity of empirical evidence is problematic, since part-time work and workers are heterogenous, and their heterogeneity needs to be taken into account in debates about laws and regulatory policies targeted at contingent employment relations.

This paper provides a broad overview of some important correlates of part-time work

³ Source of data in Figure 1: computations by Mishel and Bernstein (1994: Table 4.12).

and workers in the United States. Consistent with general practice, we define part-time work as any job that regularly employs a person less than 35 hours per week (U.S. Department of Labor, 1988: 9). The analysis is based on data from the General Social Survey (GSS), a multitopic survey of the U.S. population that has been conducted almost every year since 1972 by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center (see Davis and Smith, 1992). These surveys are useful for studying part-time employment since they contain information on work rewards and attitudes for a representative sample of the employed U.S. population (both part-time and full-time); such data are currently unavailable from the larger Current Population Surveys.

The first section of the paper summarizes differences between part-time and full-time work and workers. We begin our analysis by comparing the work motivations of part-time and full-time workers. We then compare the nature of part-time and full-time work with regard to various economic (earnings, fringe benefits) and non-economic (opportunities for advancement, autonomy and job challenge) job rewards. We finally compare these groups' work attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and their feelings about union representation. The second section of the paper discusses some of the policy-related, regulatory issues that are raised by these differences between part-time and full-time workers.

I. A COMPARISON OF PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

A. WHO WORKS PART-TIME?

Previous research provides a portrait of part-time workers in contemporary America.

Compared to full-timers, part-time workers tend to:

--be **women**. Figure 2 shows the percent of working men and women in the United States who were employed part-time during the past several decades. Both the BLS and GSS data indicate that women were much more likely than men to work part-time in each year.⁴

-- FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE --

--be **younger** (21 percent are aged 16 to 19) and **older** workers (18 percent are aged 55 or older) (Kahne, 1992).

--have **less education** (persons with less than a high school diploma are more likely to be involuntary part-timers--Levitan and Conway, 1992).

--be **non-white** (black and Hispanic men and women have historically experienced much higher rates of involuntary part-time employment than men [Levitan and Conway, 1992], though white women have had higher rates of voluntary part-time work [22.5%] in 1988--Tilly, 1990).

--be women with more **family** responsibilities. For example, women in the child-rearing ages of 25-44 are more apt to need flexible schedules and are thus nearly eight

⁴ The Bureau of Labor Statistics' estimates of part-time employment are lower than those obtained from the GSS, mainly because the BLS includes persons aged 20 and over while the GSS includes persons over 18. As we note in this section, a relatively large proportion of persons who are younger than age 20 work part-time.

times more likely than men in this age bracket to work part-time (Levitan and Conway, 1992).

--work in sales, clerical, service and unskilled labor occupations (Levitan and Conway, 1992, report that nearly 78% of part-time jobs--vs. 55% of full-time jobs--are in these relatively low-paying occupations).

--work in wholesale and retail trade and in service industries (in 1990, part-timers comprised 29.5% of wage and salary workers in trade, and 23.6% in services-- Callaghan and Hartmann, 1991).

B. WHAT MOTIVATES AMERICANS TO WORK PART-TIME?

People work part-time for many reasons: to have more time to study or to meet family obligations; to supplement income; to ease into retirement; and so on. The most common way of classifying these motivations is by whether people work part-time *voluntarily* or *involuntarily*. *Voluntary* part-timers are generally assumed to choose to work short hours, either because they do not want or are not available for full-time work (Levitan and Conway, 1992). Examples of voluntary part-time workers include persons who want a reduced work schedule in order to care for young children, and students who desire less than full-time employment so that they can attend school. By contrast, the Bureau of Labor Statistics classifies as *involuntary* part-timers those who work less than 35 hours due to demand-related reasons such as slack work or inability to find a full-time job. However, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary part-time workers is often murky and quite problematic: for example, some women who are classified as working part-time "voluntarily" might well

prefer full-time work if adequate and affordable child care were available; moreover, an unknown number of "voluntary" part-time are employed short hours not because they don't want to work full-time, but because they are unable to do so due to disability or inadequate transportation.

The ambiguities surrounding the distinction between voluntary and involuntary part-time employment suggests the need to go beyond such often-arbitrary classifications and to examine more directly the work motivations of part-time vs. full-time workers. Such an investigation may help to dispel many stereotypes about part-time work: the term often has negative connotations such as weak commitment to work and lack of ambition (see Warne, Lundy, & Lundy, 1992). Our analysis focuses on two dimensions of work motivation: the role of work in a person's life; and the importance a person places on the various facets of work. Table 1 presents some evidence from the 1989 GSS on these two aspects of work motivations.⁵

-- TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE --

Work as a Central Life Interest

In 1989, part-timers appeared to be just as likely as those who work full-time to agree that "work is a person's most important activity" ("Work is CLI"). (Men were more likely than women to agree with this, but part-timers and full-timers of each sex did not differ.)

⁵ The mean values presented in Table 1 (and Table 3) are adjusted for differences among sub-samples in their age, education, race, self-employment, and supervisory position.

Moreover, part-timers and full-timers were equally likely to agree that they "would enjoy having a paid job even if they did not need that money" ("Work if rich"). Figure 3 indicates that there was no difference between part-timers and full-timers (in 1991) in a similar (but differently worded) item asking whether they would continue to work if they didn't need the money ("Richwork"). Men were again more likely than women to agree with this statement, further suggesting that males view work as more of a central life interest than women. These results are consistent with Warne, Lundy, & Lundy's (1992: p. 3) observation that: "employment ... is no less central to the lives of part-time workers than it is to their full-time counterparts."

-- FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE --

Work Values: the Importance People Place on Various Job Rewards

Why do people work? What do persons find desirable in their jobs? Table 1 also reports data from the 1989 GSS on the importance that male and female part-time and full-time workers placed on various aspects of work. There were only two significant differences in (adjusted mean) work values between part-time and full-time workers: women who work full-time were more likely than women who work part-time to place greater importance on having "a job that allows someone to work independently;" and males--but not females--who worked part-time placed greater importance than their full-time counterparts on having "a job that leaves a lot of leisure time." This reflects the desire for flexibility that is often assumed to be a major reason why individuals choose to work part-time.

In summary, our analysis of work motivations indicates that part-time and full-time workers are similar in both the role of work in their lives and the kinds of things they find important in a job. Work appears to be a central life interest for both part-time and full-time workers, and both groups place considerable importance (i.e., the average score is greater than 4 on a 5 point scale) on having a job that provides security, opportunities for advancement, and is interesting.

C. THE NATURE OF PART-TIME WORK

The quality of part-time jobs differs. Tilly (1990) distinguishes among *short-time*, *secondary*, and *retention* part-time jobs. In short-time jobs (which make up less than 10% of all part-time employment), employers temporarily reduce employees' hours rather than lay them off. Secondary part-time jobs (which constitute the bulk of part-time work) are characterized by relatively low skill, low pay, low fringe benefits, no security, few opportunities for advancement, low productivity and high turnover. (Kahne, 1992, labels these "old concept" part-time jobs, in which firms have weak commitment to part-time workers, and provide them with little training and rewards.) By contrast, retention part-time jobs (which Kahne labels as "new concept" part-time jobs) are generally offered by employers to valued and usually highly skilled employees whose life circumstances prevent them from working full-time (e.g., women with young children). These retention part-time jobs may also provide fringe benefits on a prorated basis, as well as relatively high earnings and other job rewards.⁶

⁶ Retention part-time jobs are thus not really forms of "contingent" employment: they are neither uncertain or unpredictable; and their incumbents often work part-time on a

Table 2 compares the job rewards of part-time and full-time workers.⁷ Full-time men were significantly more likely than men who worked part-time to agree that their "job is secure" (3.87 vs. 3.58 on a five-point scale, where 5 = "strongly agree"); the difference between full-time and part-time women was not statistically significant. A possible operational definition of retention vs. secondary part-time jobs might be the extent to which part-timers feel that their jobs are "secure," though we will not pursue this line of analysis further here. Instead, we focus on differences between part-time and full-time men and women in the remainder of this section, not on differences among part-timers themselves.

-- TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE --

Earnings

Studies have repeatedly shown that full-timers earn more than part-timers. Levitan and Conway (1992) found that part-timers earned (in 1987) 59% of what full-timers did: a median hourly wage of \$4.42, compared to \$7.43 for full-time workers. Callaghan and Hartmann

more-or-less permanent basis and have long-term, stable relations with their employers.

⁷ The means reported in Table 2 for "job security," "flexible work," and "leisure time" come from the 1989 GSS; these means are adjusted for differences among samples in their age, education, race, self-employment, and supervisory position. The other mean values presented in Table 2 come from the 1991 GSS; these means are adjusted for sample differences in age, education, experience with current employer, race, organization size, occupational prestige, and supervisory position.

(1991:11) note that part-time workers earn about 63% of the hourly wages that full-timers earn--\$5.06 per hour in 1990 compared to \$8.09 per hour for full-time workers paid by the hour. The earnings differential between part-time and full-time workers has not changed much over the past several decades. Moreover, only about one-half of this differential can be explained by the fact that part-time workers have different observed characteristics (sex, race, age, education, experience) than full-timers, and are concentrated in industries and occupations with below-average wages (e.g., sales or food service jobs) (Tilly, 1992).

The GSS earnings question refers to annual income, not the theoretically more preferable wage rates. This may explain why the ratios of part-time to full-time incomes presented in Figure 4 are generally less than the 60% figure reported by the studies cited in the previous paragraph. Nevertheless, the GSS results also show that there are fairly large and consistent earnings gaps between part-time and full-time workers: the ratios between these groups vary between 40% to near 70% for men, and from nearly 35% to 50% for women. The gaps between part-timers and full-timers tend to be larger for women than men (i.e., the ratios are smaller for women). Table 2 indicates that in 1991, the ratio of part-time to full-time incomes (controlling for the variables listed at the bottom of the table) was about 54% for men and 44% for women.

-- FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE --

Fringe Benefits

The pattern of disadvantage for part-timers with regard to (non-mandated--see Hylton, 1995) fringe benefits is clear: persons working part-time obtain fewer fringe benefits than full-

timers, even after controlling for their education, age, race, length of experience with their employer, occupational level, authority position, whether they are self-employed, and the size of their employing establishment.

— FIGURES 5, 6, 7 ABOUT HERE —

Figure 5 shows that only 49% and 46 % of part-time men and women, respectively, are eligible for medical or hospital insurance. These figures are significantly lower than the corresponding percentages for full-time men (89%) and women (83%). Figure 6 indicates that only 41% of part-time men, and 42% of part-time women, are eligible for sick leave with full pay. These percentages are significantly less than those for full-time men (65%) and women (75%). Moreover, Figure 7 shows that only 41% of part-time men, and 38% of part-time women, are eligible for a pension or retirement plan at their workplace. These percentages are also significantly less than those for full-time men (67%) and women (69%).

Table 2 also indicates that male and female part-timers are significantly less likely than full-timers to be eligible for the following fringe benefits at their workplaces: dental care benefits; life insurance; and cash or stock bonuses for performance or merit. Female (but not male) part-timers are also significantly less likely than full-timers to be eligible for maternity leave with full re-employment rights; and a profit sharing or stock option program. On the other hand, women who work part-time are more likely to have flexible hours.

Autonomy

Autonomy is a worker's ability to exercise discretion and judgment on the job. Figure 8 shows that men full-timers have more autonomy than part-timers, though the difference between women who work full-time and part-time is not statistically significant (see also Table 2). This suggests that men's jobs may be more heterogeneous and polarized than women's. Table 2 provides information on the three items that make up the autonomy scale. The only significant difference is between (male) full-time and part-time workers on the item which asks whether the job "allows the respondent to take part in making decisions that affect his/her work" ("decides about job;" we should keep in mind that these means are adjusted for organization size, education, supervisory position, and the other variables listed at the bottom of Table 2). Men and women part-timers are also less likely than full-timers to feel that they "have a lot to say over what happens on their job" ("lot to say"), but these differences are not statistically significant. There is also no statistically significant difference between part-time and full-time workers on the third item: whether he/she is able to work "independently". The latter result is reinforced by a similar item from the 1989 survey (not shown), which indicated that part-time and full-time workers did not differ much in their ability to work independently. In interpreting these results, we should recognize that working independently does not always imply having more autonomy. For example, working independently could mean that one is not working in a team, or that one is working on a piece-work basis (e.g., sewing operator in apparel) or on a commission basis (e.g., sales clerk in a department store). Employers are probably more apt to assign full-timers to work in teams, thus giving them less opportunity to work independently.

-- FIGURE 8 ABOUT HERE --

Advancement Opportunities

The opportunity for advancement is a widely coveted reward in American society and is one that is often used to differentiate "good" from "bad," "dead-end" jobs. Figure 9 (see also Table 2) shows that male part-timers are significantly less likely than full-timers to say that they have been promoted in the past with their current employer; women part-time workers are also less likely than their full-time counterparts to say they have been promoted, but this difference is not statistically significant.

-- FIGURE 9 ABOUT HERE --

Flexibility

Both male and female part-timers were significantly more likely than full-timers to agree that their job "leaves a lot of leisure time" and "has flexible working hours" (see Table 2). This underscores what is often considered to be a major advantage of part-time work: it gives people the flexibility to engage in activities associated with their non-work social roles.

In summary, our analyses in this section have shown that part-time workers receive fewer job rewards than full-time workers. This difference is especially pronounced with regard to earnings and fringe benefits, though men who work part-time are also disadvantaged with regard to autonomy and advancement opportunities.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction--the most commonly studied work attitude--is an overall affective orientation on the part of workers toward jobs they are presently occupying. Theoretically, a worker's overall evaluation of his/her job depends on his/her assessment of the fit between his/her work values and job rewards (see Kalleberg, 1977). Our analyses in previous sections have indicated that part-timers have similar work motivations and values to full-timers, yet part-time workers obtain significantly fewer economic and non-economic job rewards. This suggests that the gaps between what people want and actually receive are greater for part-timers, and thus we might expect them to be less satisfied with their jobs than full-timers.

Figure 10 compares the job satisfaction levels of part-time and full-time male and female workers in each of the GSS surveys.⁸ The horizontal line at "1" indicates the point at which the average job satisfaction of part-timers and full-timers is equal; the lower the ratio, the greater the satisfaction gap between part-time and full-time workers. The gaps in job satisfaction between part-timers and full-timers (male as well as female) in 1989 and 1991 are relatively small and not statistically significant. In only one year (1976) was the job satisfaction of part-time women lower than that of their full-time counterparts. By contrast, part-time male workers had significantly lower job satisfaction than men who worked full-time in six

⁸ The job satisfaction question was: "On the whole, how satisfied are you with the work you do--would you say you are satisfied (=4), moderately satisfied (=3), a little dissatisfied (=2), or very dissatisfied (=1)? The ratios presented in Figure 10 were formed by dividing the average (mean) job satisfaction score of part-timers by the corresponding score of full-time workers.

years (1976, 1977, 1982, 1983, 1985, and 1987). Moreover, the ratios of part-time to full-time workers' job satisfaction also appear to fluctuate more widely for men than for women. The relatively low ratios for men at certain time periods are consistent with the view that men tend to place greater importance than women on having a full-time job. Hence, working part-time (and thereby receiving lower pay, fringe benefits, and other job rewards) may seem more problematic to males.

-- FIGURE 10 ABOUT HERE --

To examine further some possible reasons for the absence of a gap in job satisfaction between part-timers and full-timers in 1989 and 1991 (the two years for which we have data on both rewards and values), we constructed indicators of "fit" between various work values and job rewards. These are presented in Table 3. We created these measures of "fit" by subtracting the reward level from the importance the GSS respondent placed on the reward (the value and corresponding reward were both scored on a five point scale, where 1 = low reward availability and/or importance, and 5 = high reward availability and/or importance, respectively). A positive score indicates that the value exceeds the reward, i.e., people are not getting what they want; while a negative score indicates that the value is fulfilled.

-- TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE --

Table 3 indicates that part-time men are more apt than full-timers to have unfulfilled

values with regard to job security; this gap is due primarily to the greater availability of job security among full-time male workers. On the other hand, full-time men and women are more likely than part-timers to have significantly more unfulfilled values with regard to having jobs that provide flexible working hours. Full-timers are also more likely to have poorer fits with regard to having jobs that leave a lot of leisure time, but this difference is statistically significant only for women. The advantages with regard to flexibility associated with part-time work may partly offset some of its disadvantages, and this may explain in part the absence of an overall satisfaction gap between full-time and part-time workers, at least in 1989 and 1991.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is an overall indicator of a worker's loyalty and attachment to his/her employer, and of the extent to which the worker is motivated to expend effort on the organization's behalf. Figure 11 shows that full-time and part-time workers are about equally committed to their employers (see also Table 2).

— FIGURE 11 ABOUT HERE —

The only one item (out of the six items that comprise the organizational commitment scale used in Figure 11) on which there is a significant difference between part-time and full-time workers is on the "effort" dimension: female full-timers are more likely to say that they are "willing to work harder than they have to in order to help their companies succeed" (see Table 2) (part-time males are also less likely to agree with this than full-time males, but this

difference is not statistically significant). This is an important difference, since "effort" is the dimension of commitment that has been shown to be most closely linked to job performance (Kalleberg and Marsden, 1995). This difference in (reported) effort points to a drawback of employers' reliance on part-time and other forms of contingent work: this "low road" approach to decreasing labor costs by reducing payroll may lower worker effort, thereby resulting in less productivity and poorer product quality.

Attitudes Toward Union Representation

The 1991 GSS data indicate that part-timers are less likely than full-timers to be union members (see Table 2: 20% of part-time males compared to 26% of full-time males are union members, while the corresponding percentages for women are 9% and 17%), though these differences are not statistically significant. This result may be specific to the 1991 GSS data, or it may be due to our having controlled for organization size, occupational prestige, supervisory position, and the other variables listed at the bottom of Table 2.⁹ In any event, other surveys of the U.S. labor force have shown that unionization rates for part-timers are considerably lower than those for full-time workers (Warne, Lundy and Lundy, 1992: 6). More importantly, there is no difference by work status in the proportion saying that they would vote for a union in a representation election: Figure 12 shows that 54% of male part-timers and 46% of male full-timers would vote for having a union represent them; the corresponding percentages for women are 39% and 38%, respectively. This finding suggests that part-timers

⁹ The unadjusted proportions of union members are: 10% and 18% for part-time and full-time men, respectively; and 6% and 13% for part-time and full-time women.

are equally (if not more) likely as full-timers to want union representation. Unions in the U.S. thus should not overlook part-time workers as a source of new recruits. Indeed, the lower pay, benefits, job security, and lack of advancement opportunities given to part-time workers may signal both the opportunity and need for unions to increase their representation of this group.

-- FIGURE 12 ABOUT HERE --

II. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The growth of part-time and other contingent employment relations raises important and far-ranging questions about both organizations' management of human resources and their employees' experiences of work. The increase in part-time workers has simultaneously positive and negative aspects: it provides opportunities for greater flexibility for both employers and employees; at the same time, it contributes to growing polarization in income, benefits, advancement opportunities, autonomy, and other job rewards. These contradictory trends call for more enlightened public policies, greater accountability by employers, and a more inclusive perspective by unions (see Kahne, 1992).

From an employer's point of view, contingent work provides greater flexibility and lower labor costs, especially with regard to fringe benefits. On the negative side, contingency workers may have little basis for loyalty to the organization, and thus few reasons to work hard and perform well. From the point of view of individuals in the labor force, there may be other disadvantages: many do not work part-time voluntarily, and so it is not by choice that they are

working in jobs with greater employment uncertainty, relatively low wages and few (if any) fringe benefits, low chances for career advancement and autonomy and few opportunities to develop and use job skills. The voluntary-involuntary distinction has important implications for our thinking about many policy and legal regulatory issues. If people choose voluntarily to work part-time, then presumably they are getting what they want, and there is less of a problem in need of legislative and/or regulatory remedy. Involuntary part-time work is potentially more problematic, since people who do not choose to work part-time are presumably less able to satisfy their needs and wants. In any event, the ambiguities associated with the voluntary-involuntary distinction noted earlier makes it a less-than-satisfactory basis for deciding whether or not a worker has chosen to work part-time or has been constrained to do so.

The expansion of (especially involuntary) part-time and other forms of contingent work has been described by Harrison (1994) as the "dark side" of flexible production that has created a new form of industrial dualism. This polarization in both economic and non-economic job rewards has sharpened the division between permanent insiders and contingent outsiders, often within the same firm (see also Smith, 1994). A consequence of this dualism is greater inequality of earnings among working Americans: Tilly (1990) estimates that 42% of growth of inequality in annual wages and salaries between 1978 and 1984 was due to the increase in part-time employment.

Inequalities and inequities experienced by contingency workers--in earnings, fringe benefits, and the lack of workplace protections--place a heavy burden on our welfare system and the taxpaying public who in part subsidize the cost of part-time work through mechanisms

such as social welfare and health care. In addition, by aiming benefit programs such as unemployment insurance, health-care protection and pensions at full-time workers, large gaps are growing in the social safety net. The use of contingent work may also signal problems with productivity and long-term competitiveness: these goals may well be served best by high-wage, low turnover productivity strategies; not the low-wage, high turnover staffing strategy often associated with contingent work.

In light of the advantages of part-time work—especially with regard to flexibility—for both employers and employees, it is not a good idea to discourage this alternative to full-time employment. Instead, policies need to address some of the more negative features of this employment relation, particularly the unequal treatment of part-timers, and the effects of this practice on other workers. For example, companies should be discouraged from using poorly paid part-time positions to undermine labor unions, to lower the earnings of full-timers, and/or to change full-time work to cheaper, lower skilled, part-time work. Legislation and legal regulation should be directed at areas in which there are especially great deficiencies in job rewards—such as fringe benefits—as well as in autonomy and/or effort, which is related to quality of work produced and to productivity. We briefly consider some policies associated with each of these areas.

Pay

Part-time workers constitute more than half of persons working for minimum and subminimum wages in the United States. In 1987, women working part-time made up 44% of such workers; male part-timers constituted 22% (Levitan and Conway, 1992). 28% of all part-

time jobs pay the minimum wage or less, compared to 5% of all full-time jobs (Kahne, 1992). The low wages associated with part-time work have implications that extend beyond the workplace; for example, they help to make workers ineffective consumers. Thus, one needed policy would be to increase substantially the minimum wage, perhaps restoring it to the standard maintained through the 1970s of 50 percent of the median hourly wage.

In addition, the presence of part-time workers can depress the earnings of full-timers, since employers may substitute cheaper part-timers for more expensive full-timers. Tilly (1990) reports that full-timers working in a sector where one-third of workers are part-time earn less (\$1.21 less per hour, on average) than identical full-timers working in an industry where there are no part-timers.

There are also a set of social welfare policies related to low pay for part-timers that need to be addressed. For example, in most states, unemployment insurance requires a minimum earnings threshold that excludes many part-timers. In addition, most state unemployment insurance laws require that recipients be available for full-time work. And social security caps the income that is subject to payroll taxes, which means that part-timers and other low income groups are taxed at a higher rate.

Health care coverage

We have documented the gap in health insurance and medical benefits between full-time and part-time workers. Even those engaged in the most favorable form of part-time employment--"retention" part-time workers--generally do not receive the same benefits as those granted full-time workers, though their work may provide job security and other benefits

not available to other part-time workers (Olmsted and Smith, 1989:63). Section 89 of the Tax Reform Act of 1986 required that part-time workers receive a benefits package that was equivalent to that received by full-timers (prorated to reflect differences in hours worked), but this was repealed in 1989, after a concerted employer campaign against it (Tilly, 1990).

Legislation such as the "Part-time and Temporary Workers Protection Act" (most recently proposed by U.S. Representative Patricia Schroeder [D-CO] in 1993) would--among other things-- require employers to offer health benefits on a prorated basis to part-timers where such benefits are currently extended to full-time workers.¹⁰ An alternative, and in some ways preferable, alternative might be to provide health benefits to *all* workers, regardless of how many hours they work or the nature of their employment relationship.

Part-time workers are also generally excluded from benefits of the Family and Medical Leave Act, which covers individuals who are employed by an eligible company for at least a year and who worked more than 1,250 hours during the previous 12 months. The Family and Medical Leave Act excludes employees who work an average of less than 25 hours per week (Holmes et al., 1992:53).

Retirement and Pension Plans

Differences in retirement and pension benefits between part- and full-time employees underscore the need to extend the Employment Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) to prohibit the exclusion of part-time workers from pension plans where full-time workers are

¹⁰ As Kahne (1992) observes, some benefits--such as holiday, vacation and sick leave--are easier to prorate than others (e.g., pension and health benefits).

covered. duRivage suggests that "Congress should amend ERISA to require employers who provide pension benefits to include 100 percent of their workers in a single line of business and to prohibit the exclusion of part-time workers from pension plans where full-time workers are covered" (1992: p. 102). Representative Schroeder introduced legislation (Tilly, 1990) that would reduce the ERISA requirement for pension eligibility from 1000 hours per year, where a pension plan exists. In addition to lowering this minimum hours threshold, ERISA's scope might well be extended to other key benefits such as health insurance. Moreover, quicker vesting and more pension portability between jobs would expand coverage to women in particular and ease the economic strain of retirement (Golden, 1992).

Career Advancement

Down-sizing and other forms of "re-engineering" make it increasingly difficult for even full-time workers to obtain career advancement in the modern corporation. But systematic differentials in advancement opportunities between part-time and full-time workers should be avoided. In particular, failure to provide promotion opportunities to part-timers may be a form of discrimination against women and minorities.

Union representation of part-timers

Unions in the United States historically have opposed part-time work, and have done little to extend contract provisions to part-timers (Appelbaum and Gregory, 1988). This is unfortunate, as part-time workers who do not belong to unions both need and want to be represented by them (see Figure 12). Labor laws should be amended to ensure that all types of

employees have an effective right to organize. For example, Tilly (1990) suggests that the National Labor Relations Act be reformed to make it fairer to unions seeking to organize part-timers. He reasons that if unions are better able to organize, they could help to lower wage differentials and other disparities between part-time and full-time workers without the need for governmental legislation.

Unions with high proportions of women members and those based in public or private service sector industries (which have high proportions of part-timers) have taken the lead in representing part-time and contingent workers (see Appelbaum and Gregory, 1988). Examples of unions that are making notable efforts in this area include: United Food and Commercial Workers Unions (UFCW); Service Employees International Union (SEIU); and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). These unions are including part-timers in the bargaining unit, and are responding to the need for parity in pay and working conditions, and to concerns for making the employment relationship less precarious for workers who need flexible schedules and those who are permanent part-timers.

Conclusion

Our analysis has shown that the work motivations of part-time and full-time workers are similar: work is just as much a central life interest for part-timers as for those who work full-time; and, with a few exceptions (e.g., part-time men place greater value on having a job that provides more leisure time), part-time and full-time workers value the same things about their jobs. The main differences between part-time and full-time workers lie in the rewards and benefits that they obtain from their jobs: part-timers are paid less and receive fewer fringe

benefits. Male part-timers also exercise less autonomy and have fewer opportunities for advancement than their full-time counterparts.

These inequalities between part-time and full-time workers in job rewards suggest the utility of considering seriously regulatory reform and other policies designed to enhance the quality of part-time work. Treating part-timers more equitably by implementing these kinds of policies and regulations may make the option of creating part-time and other jobs more expensive for employers. This may discourage employers from creating excessive numbers of contingent part-time jobs and help to curb tendencies toward greater polarization and the further development of a two-tier labor market in the United States.

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Table 1. WORK MOTIVATIONS OF MALE AND FEMALE PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME WORKERS, 1989 and 1991 GSS

	Men		Women	
	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time
WORK COMMITMENT				
Work is CLI	3.03	2.95	2.65	2.83
Work if Rich	3.42	3.45	3.60	3.62
Richwork	0.71	0.67	0.57	0.56
WORK VALUES				
Job Security	4.49	4.38	4.49	4.53
Income	4.09	4.08	3.83	3.94
Advancement	4.15	4.23	4.24	4.29
Interesting Work	4.31	4.33	4.42	4.44
Independent Work	3.74	3.88	3.74	4.11***
Leisure Time	3.46	3.15**	3.10	3.02
Flexible Work	3.66	3.65	3.70	3.64

Part-Time v. Full-time difference significant at: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (Two-tailed t-tests).

Predicted Mean Values Reported (Based on equations controlling for Age, Education, Race, Self Employment, and Supervisory position). "Work is CLI" and "Work if Rich" are scored from 1 = "strongly disagree, to 5 = "strongly agree". See Figure 3 for wording of "Richwork". Work Values measures are scored 1 = "not at all important," 5 = "very important."

Table 2. JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND WORK ATTITUDES OF MALE AND FEMALE PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME WORKERS, GSS, 1991.

	Men		Women	
	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time
Earnings	16624.88	30645.69***	9532.49	21786.70***
Fringe Benefits (=1)				
Medical Insurance	0.49	0.89***	0.46	0.83***
Dental Care	0.40	0.70***	0.36	0.62***
Life Insurance	0.35	0.76***	0.41	0.76***
Sick Leave	0.41	0.65***	0.42	0.75***
Maternity Leave	0.42	0.55	0.45	0.77***
Flexible Hours	0.46	0.40	0.65	0.52**
Cash/Stock Bonus	0.14	0.26*	0.25	0.37*
Pension/Retirement Plan	0.41	0.67***	0.38	0.69***
Profit-Sharing/Stock	0.28	0.33	0.13	0.31***
Autonomy (1-4)	2.55	2.82*	2.63	2.72
Work Independently	2.81	3.06	3.08	3.10
Lot To Say	2.35	2.58	2.35	2.50
Decides About Job	2.55	2.86*	2.50	2.59
Advancement				
Been Promoted (=1)	0.31	0.46*	0.22	0.34
Job Security (1-5)	3.58	3.87*	3.67	3.81
Flexibility				
Flexible Work (1-5)	3.42	3.01**	3.70	3.08***
Leisure Time (1-5)	3.30	2.78***	3.24	2.74***
Unions				
Union Member (=1)	0.20	0.26	0.09	0.17
Union Preference (=1)	0.54	0.46	0.39	0.38
Organizational Commitment (1-4)	2.69	2.72	2.68	2.79
Effort	3.01	3.16	2.97	3.26***
Loyalty	3.03	2.93	2.93	3.03
Proud	3.01	3.08	3.03	3.16
Values	2.77	2.73	2.86	2.87
Stay With Organization	2.26	2.18	2.15	2.22
Any Job	2.23	2.24	2.21	2.25

Part-time v. Full-time differences significant at: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (Two-tailed t-tests).

Predicted Mean Values Reported (Based on equations controlling for Age, Education, Race, Organization Size, Occupational Prestige, Self Employment, Supervisory Position, and Time with the Organization). Autonomy variables are coded from: 1 = "not at all true," to 4 = "very true." Measures of job security and flexibility are coded from: 1 = "strongly disagree," to 5 = "strongly agree." Organizational commitment measures are coded from: 1 = "strongly disagree," to 4 = "strongly agree."

Table 3. FITS BETWEEN WORK VALUES AND JOB REWARDS FOR MALE AND FEMALE PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME WORKERS, 1989 GSS

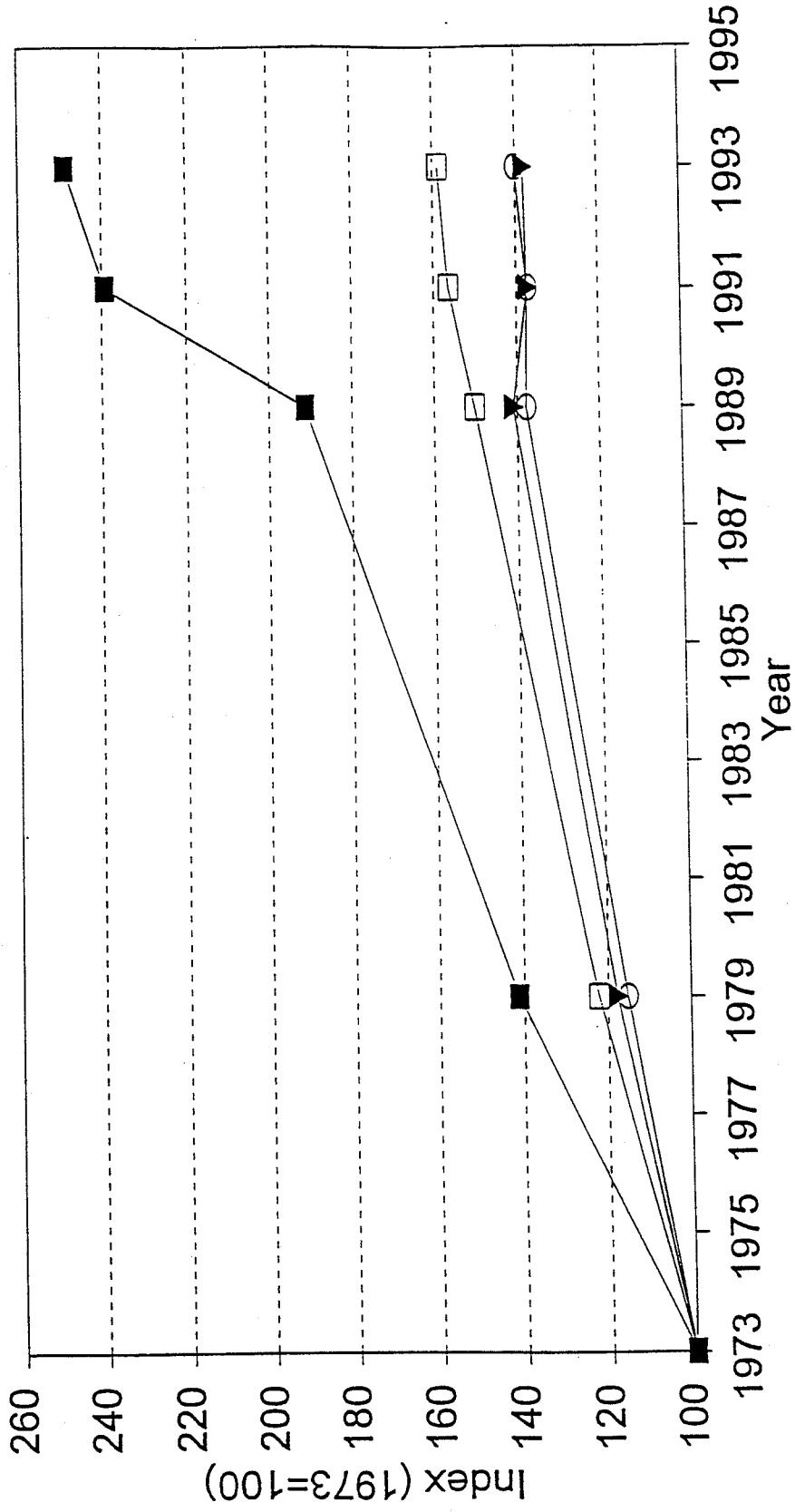
	Men		Women	
	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time
Job Security	0.91	0.49**	0.77	0.64
Income	1.38	1.21	1.48	1.34
Advancement	1.32	1.39	1.70	1.48
Interesting Work	0.53	0.66	0.65	0.59
Independent Work	0.15	0.10	0.09	0.17
Leisure Time	0.18	0.36	-0.20	0.24**
Flexible Work	0.25	0.64**	-0.05	0.56***

Part-Time v. Full-time difference significant at: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$
(Two-tailed t-tests).

Predicted Mean Values Reported (Based on equations controlling for Age, Education, Race, Self Employment, and Supervisory position).

FIGURE 1. Sources of Employment Growth

1973-1993



- Total Employment Growth
- Involuntary Part Time
- ▲ Voluntary Part Time

FIGURE 2. Percent Working Part Time:

GSS 1973-1993 (Ages 18+); BLS 1976-1991 (Ages 20+)

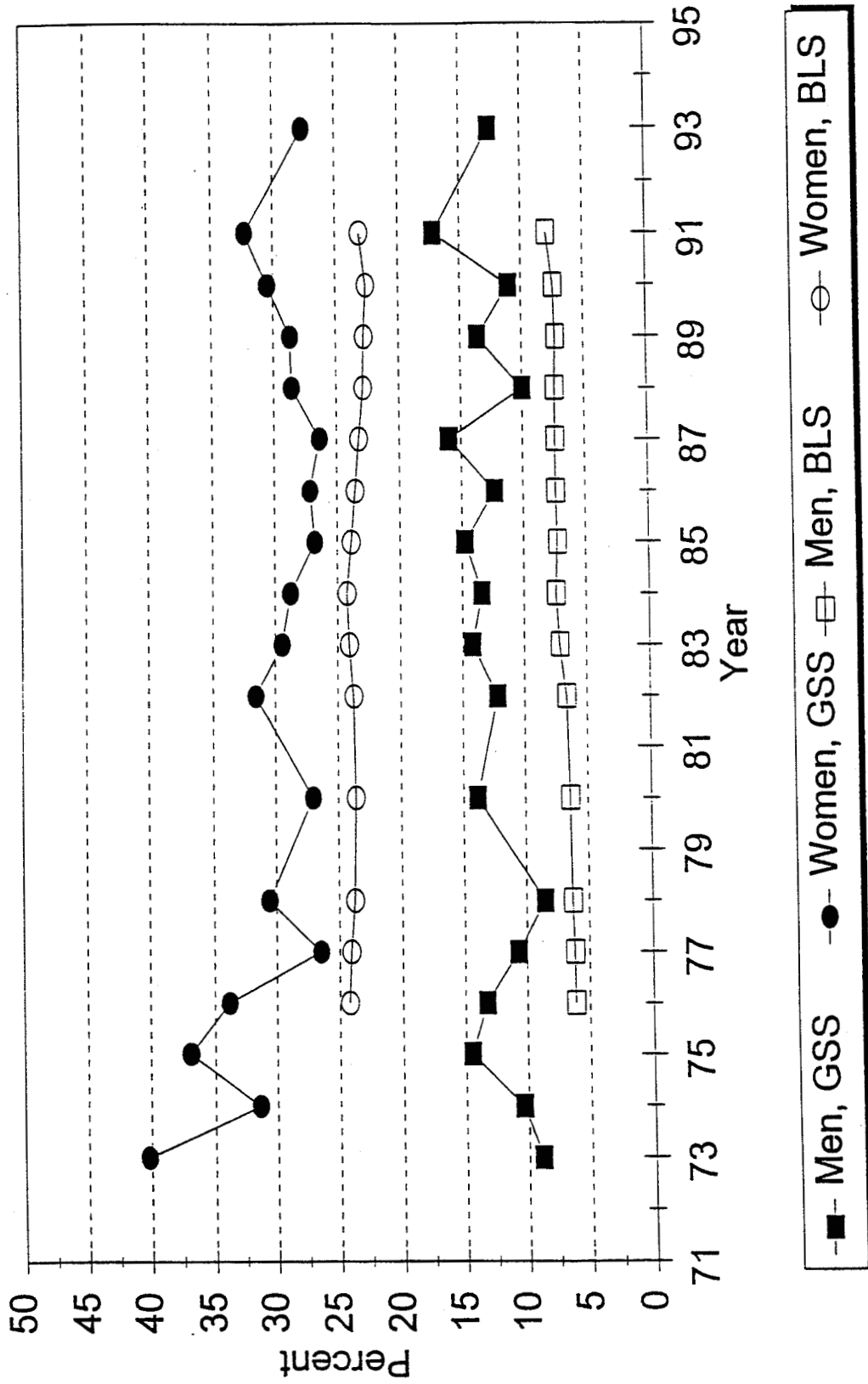
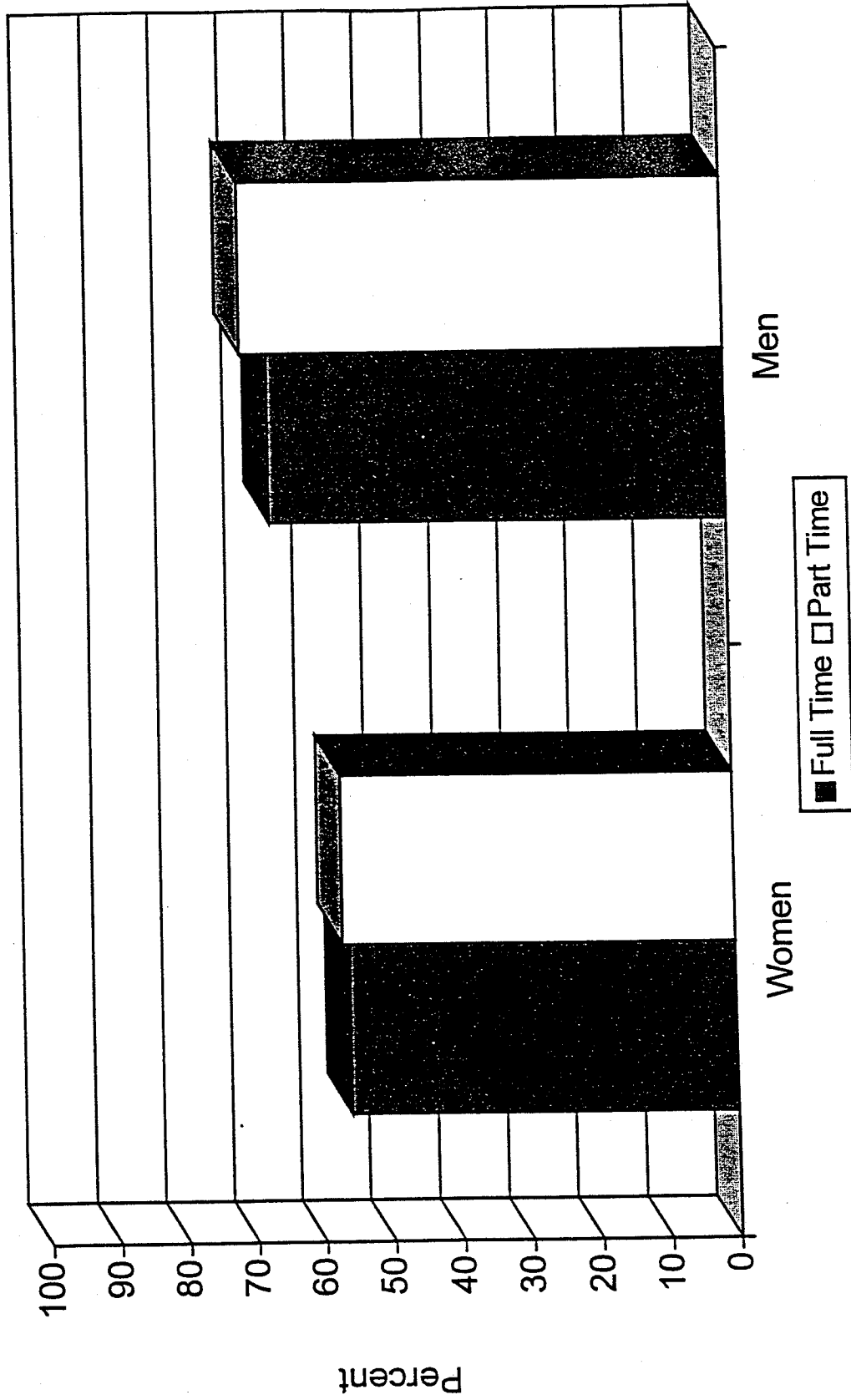


FIGURE 3. "If you were to get enough money to live as comfortably as you would like for the rest of your life, would you continue to work or would you stop working?" (1=Continue; 0=Stop)



**FIGURE 4. Income Ratios: Part Time/Full Time.
GSS 1974-1993.**

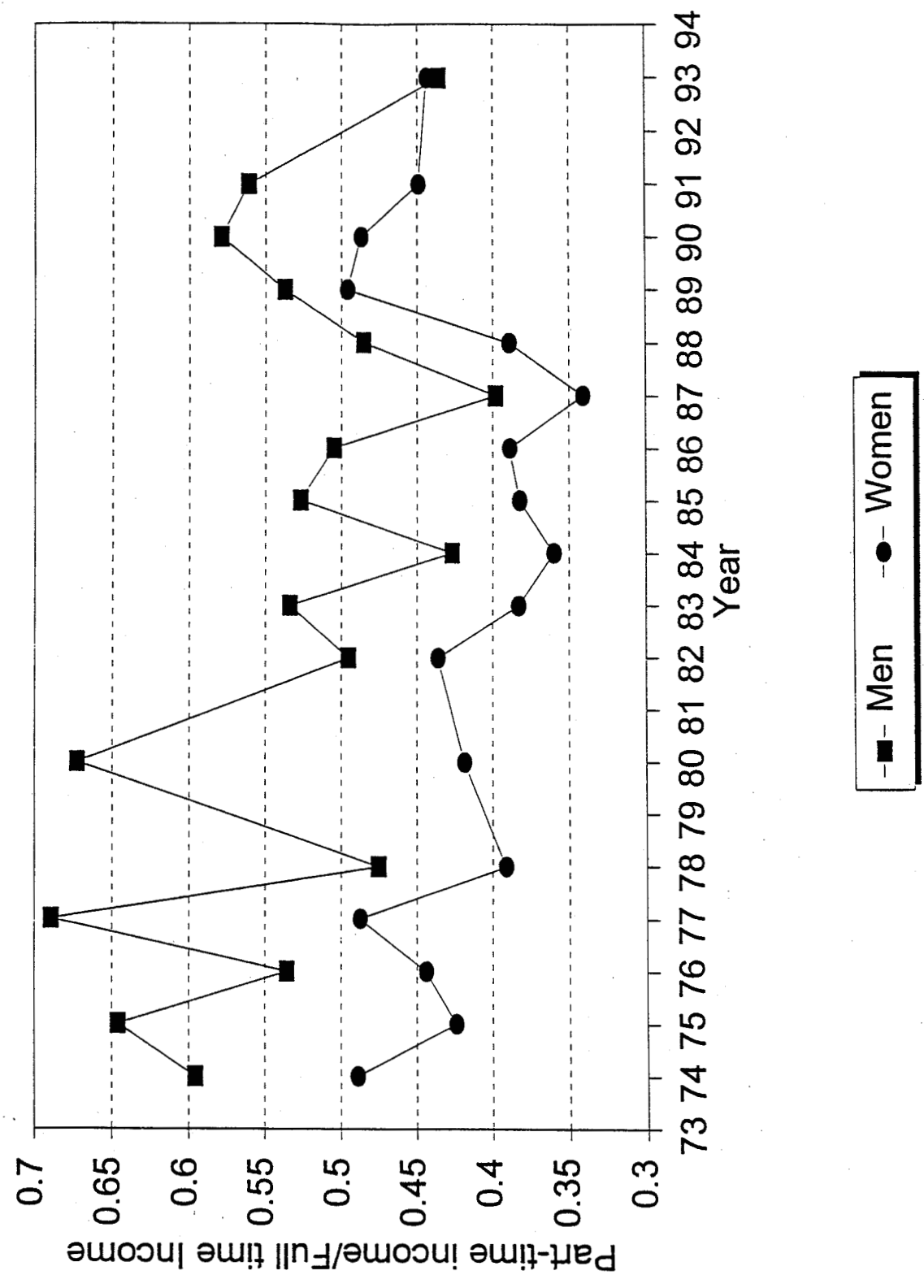


FIGURE 5. Respondent is eligible for Medical or Hospital Insurance. (1=Yes; 0=No)

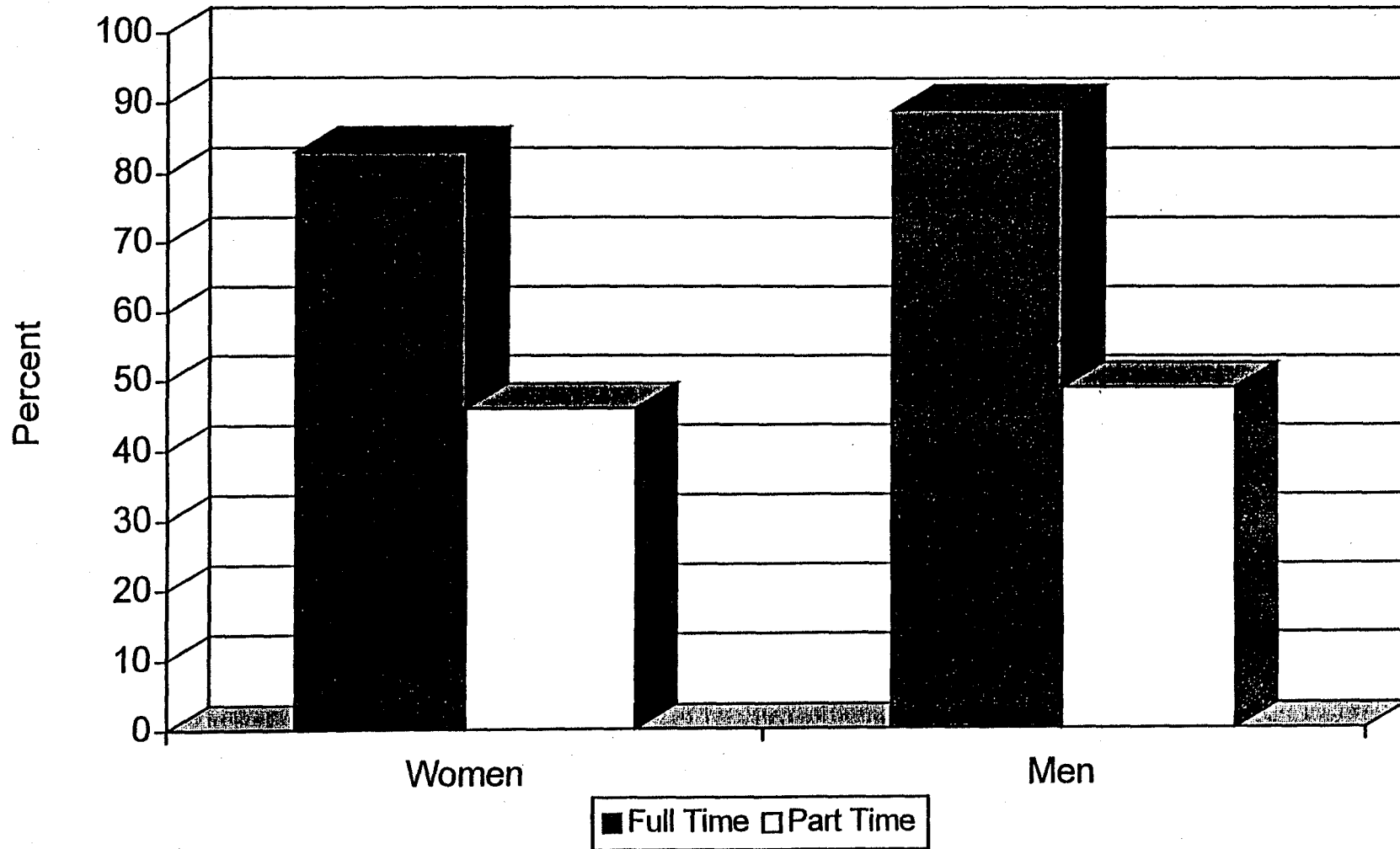
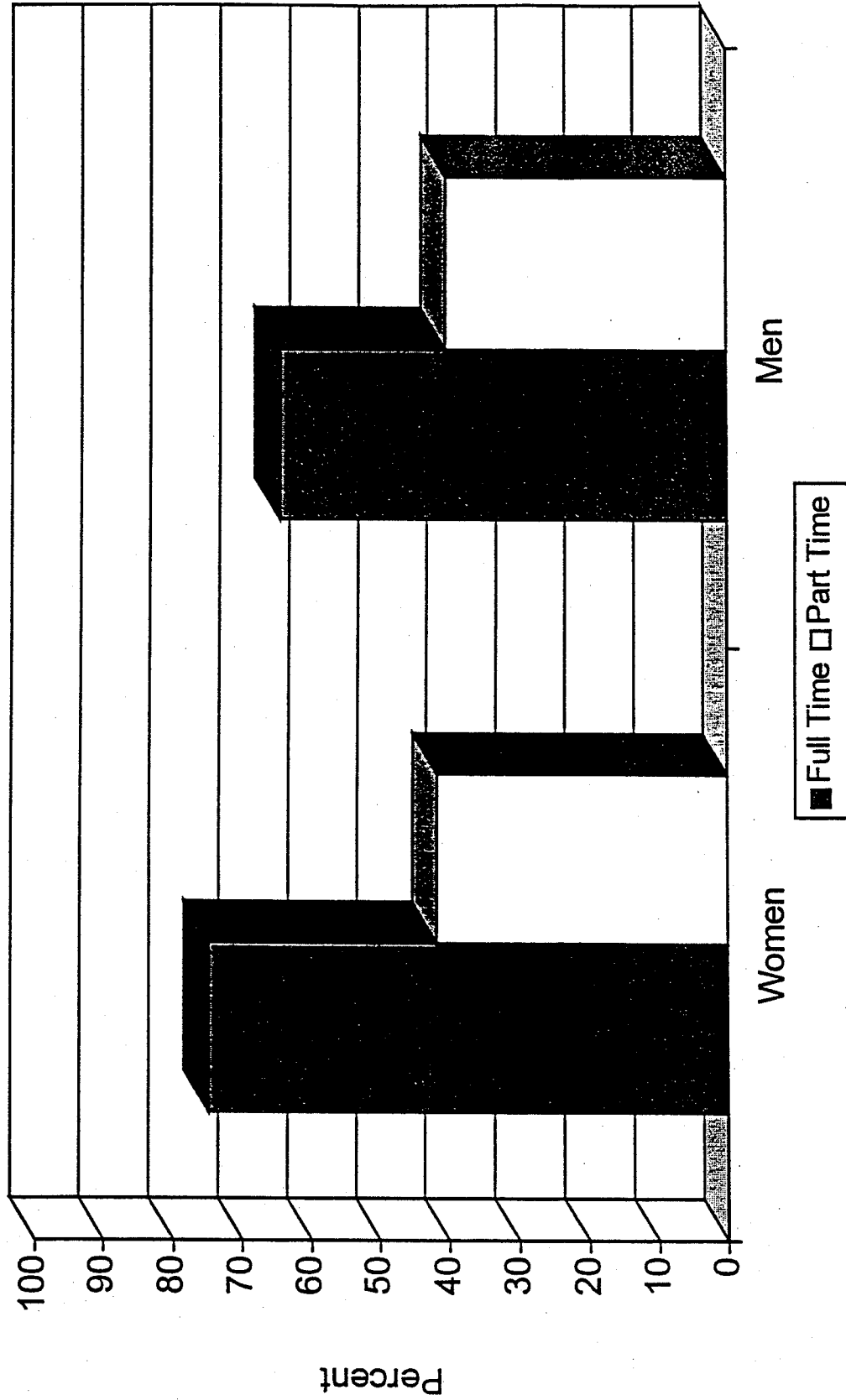
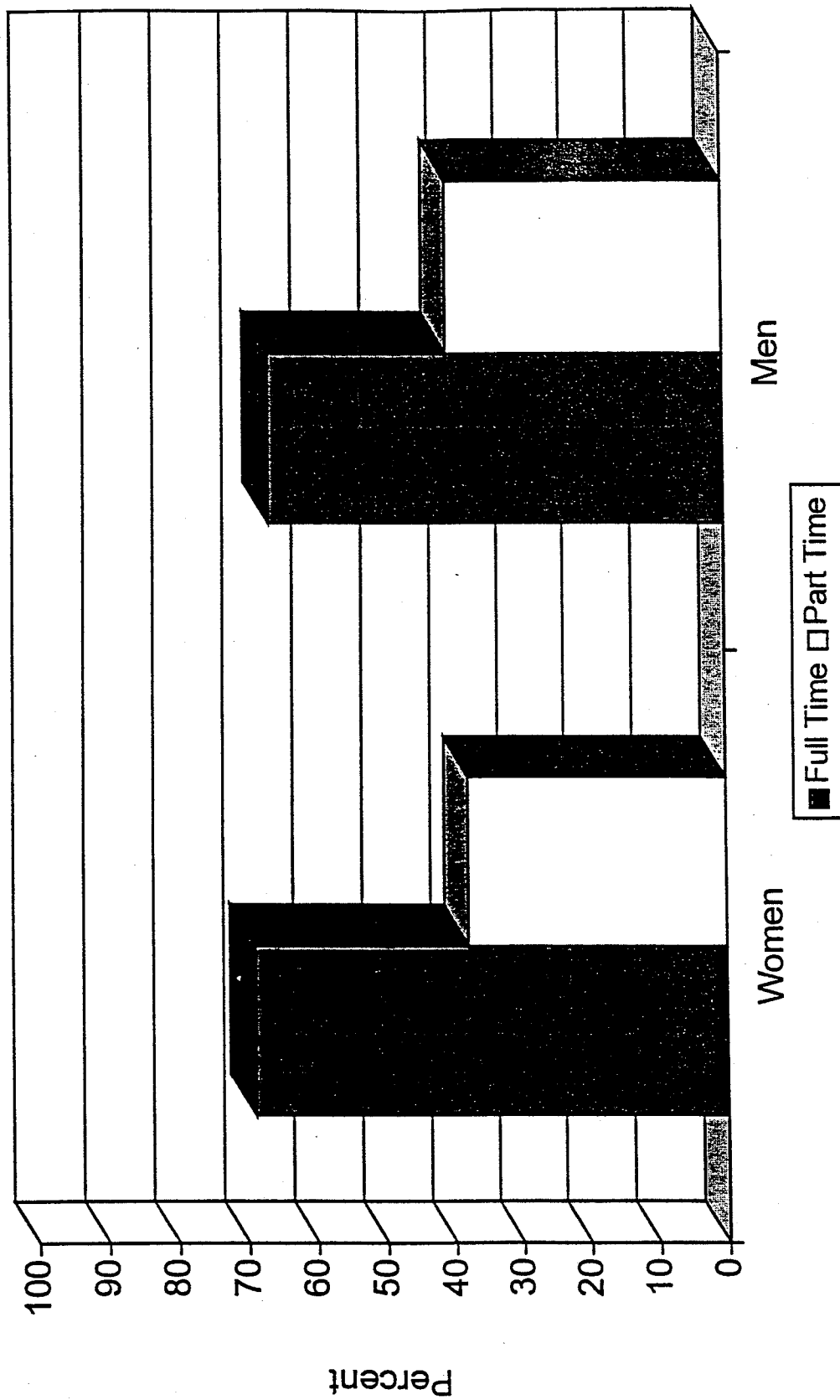


FIGURE 6. Respondent is eligible for sick leave with full pay. (1=Yes; 0=No)



GSS 1991; Percents are Predicted Values, See text for controls.

FIGURE 7. Respondent is eligible for a pension or retirement plan. (1=Yes; 0=No)



GSS 1991; Percents are Predicted Values, See text for controls.

FIGURE 8. Autonomy (1=Low; 4=High)

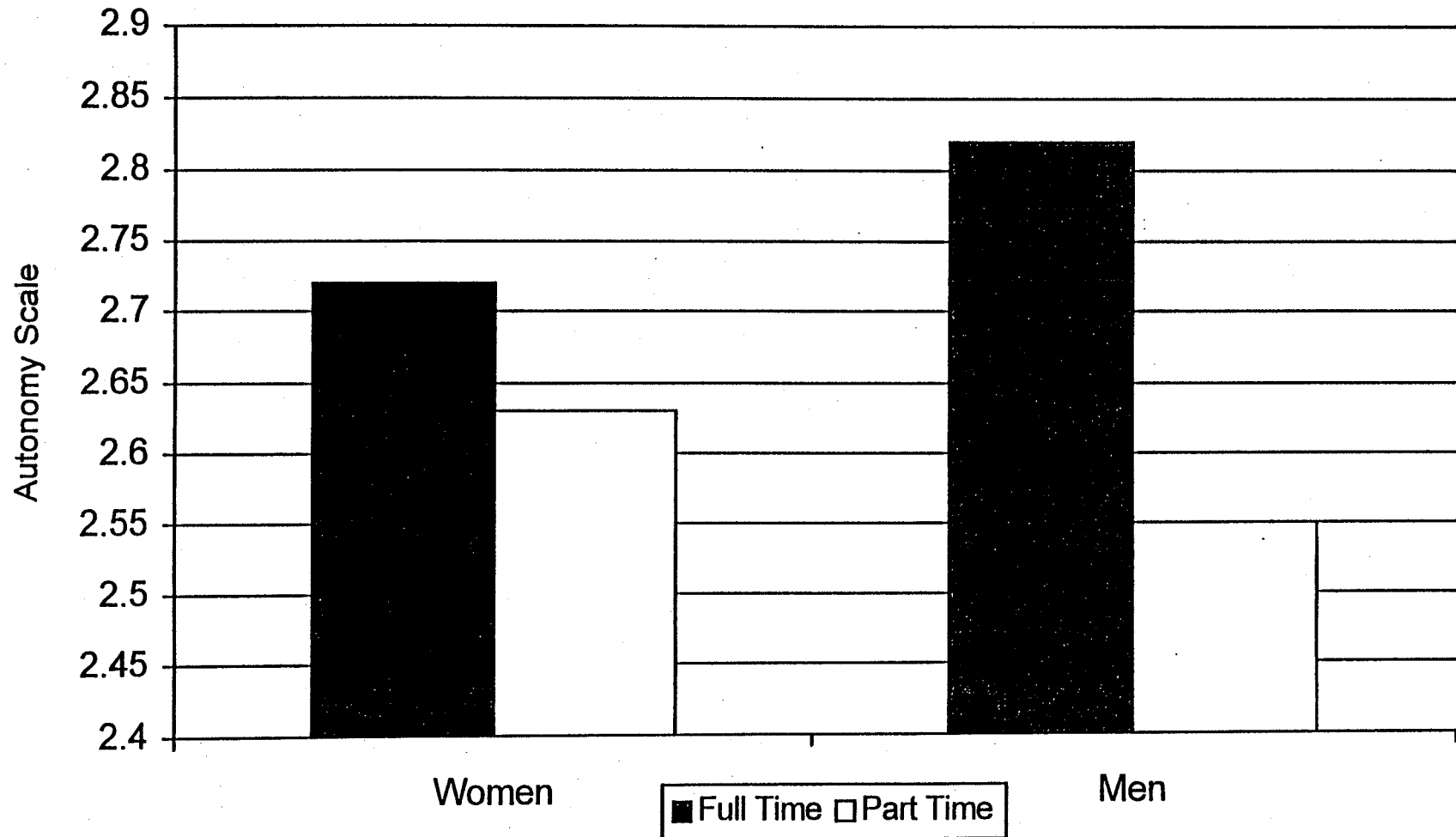


FIGURE 9. "Have you received any promotions while working for your present employer?" (1=Yes; 0=No)

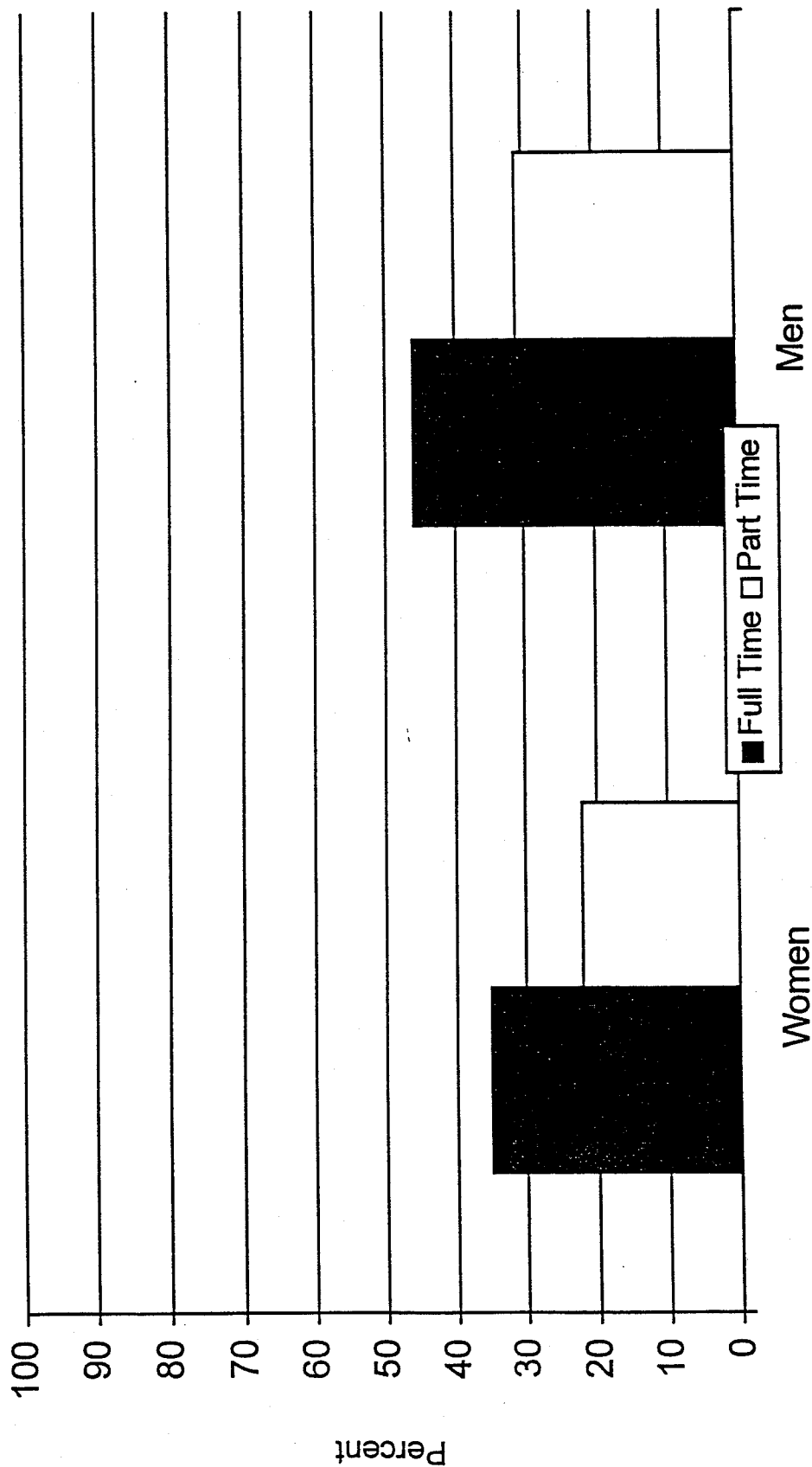
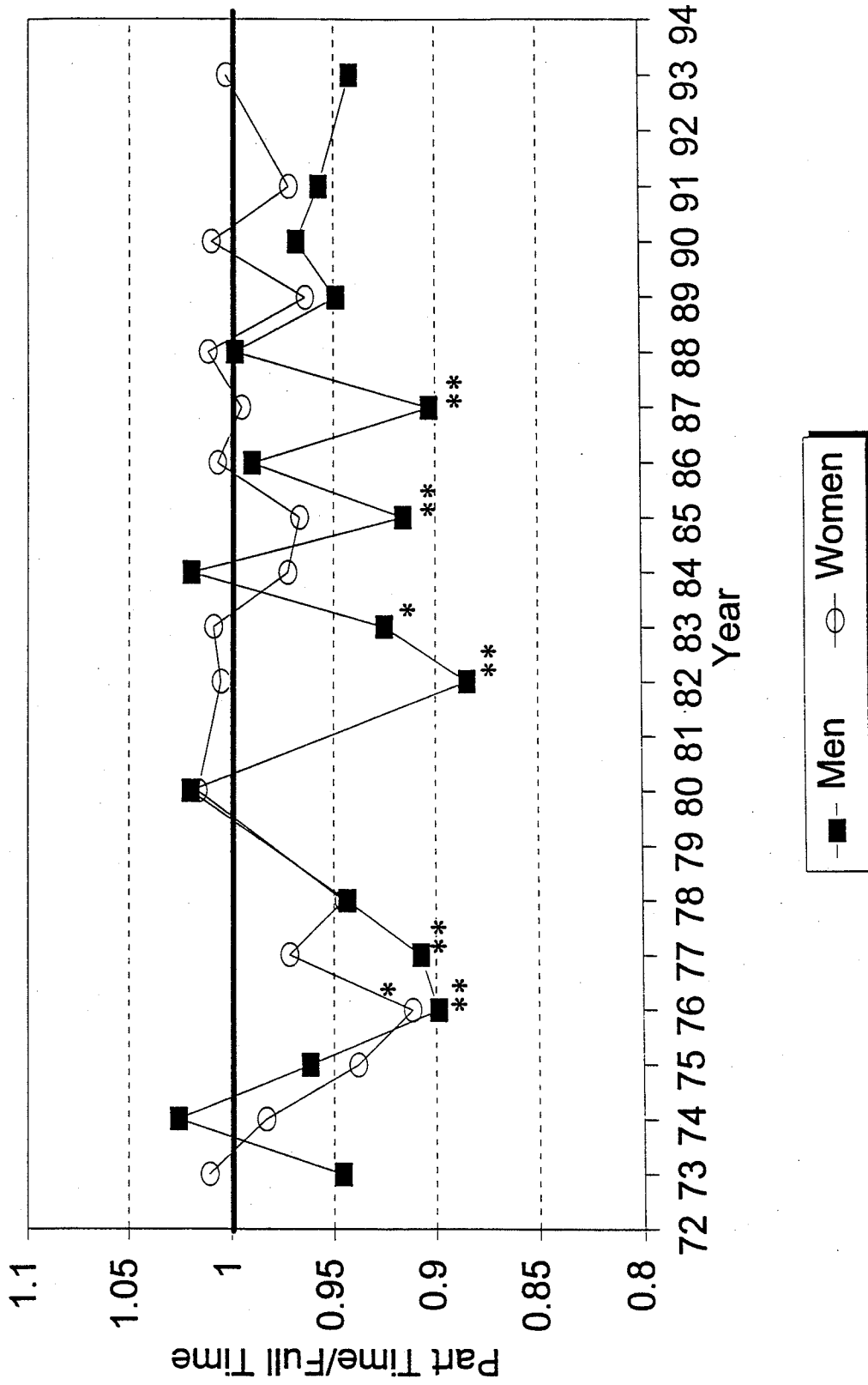


FIGURE 10. Job Satisfaction Ratios: Part Time/Full Time.

GSS, 1973-1993



* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ for a two tailed test.

**FIGURE 11. Organizational Commitment
(1=Low; 4=High)**

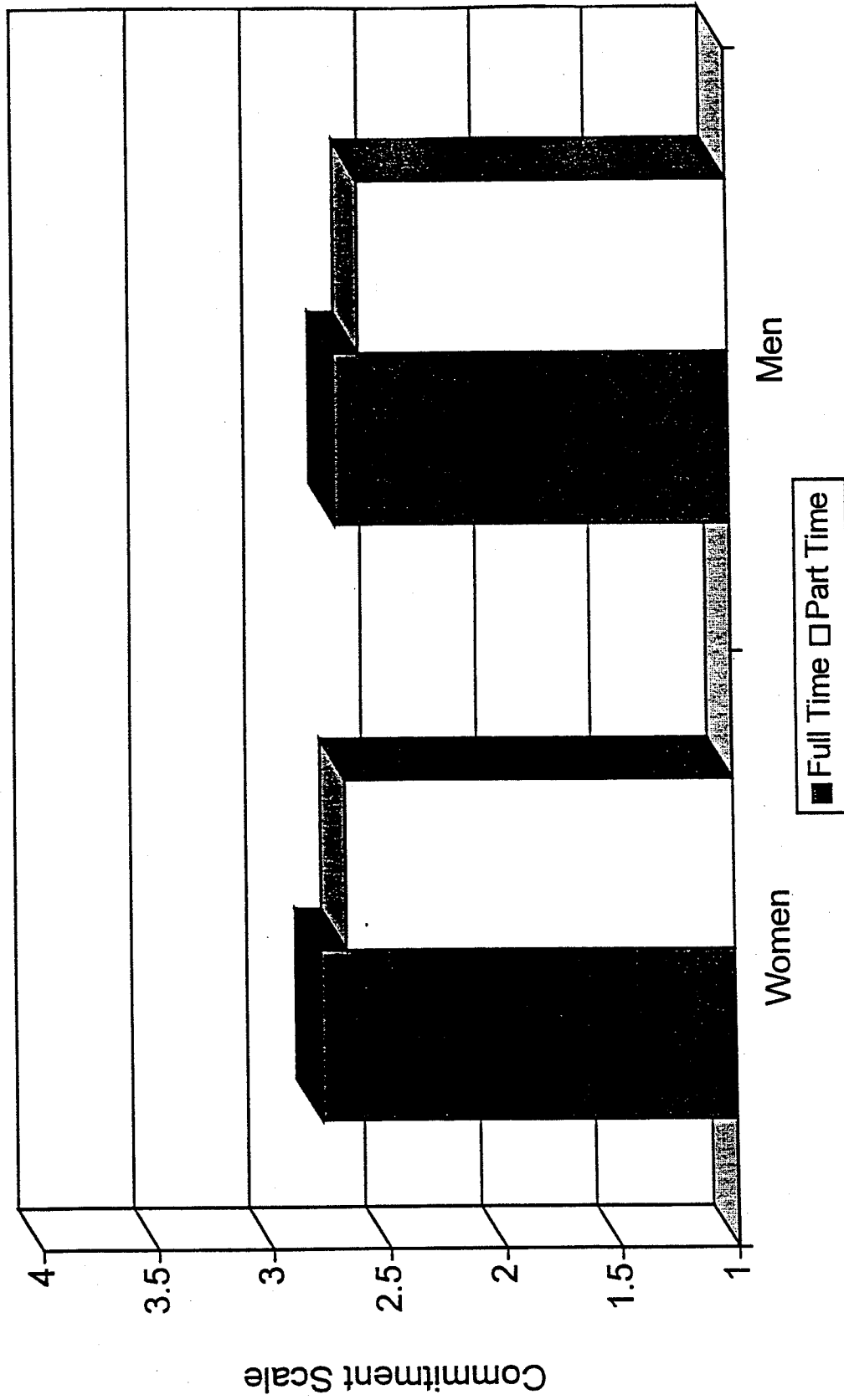


FIGURE 12. "If an election were held with secret ballots, would you vote for having a union represent you?" (1=Yes; 0=No)

