

OLDER WORKER GENDER DIFFERENCES IN USING FLEXIBLE WORK OPTIONS

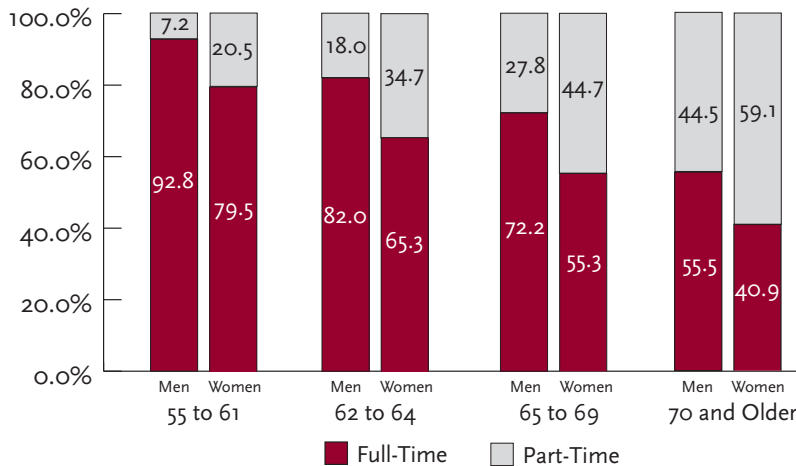
*Part-time work, flexible schedules &
bridge jobs/phased retirement*

How do male and female older workers differ in their use of flexible work options?

Part-time Work

The proportions of older workers who work part-time compared to full-time increases with age for both men and women. In 2008, 34.7% of employed women worked part-time, compared to 18.0% of men. By ages 65-69, the proportions for both genders increase to 44.7% of women and 27.8% of men. (see figure 1)¹

figure 1. Full and Part-Time Employment of Men and Women Aged 55 and Older in 2008



Source: Purcell (2008)

Flexible Schedules

The use of flexible schedules varies by gender, with higher percentages of men reporting use than women in every age group. 31.2% of men aged 45 - 54 use flexible schedules in contrast to 26.8% of women; 28.8% of men aged 55-64 use flexible schedules in comparison to 23.5% of women; and 36.7% of the men aged 65+ use flexible schedules in comparison to 22.0% of women.²

In a 2001 survey of employees in large US companies, among those who classify themselves as “regular” teleworkers (those who work from home one or more full days per week), 57% are men and 43% women. “Ad hoc” teleworkers (those who work from home at least one day per month), 64% are men and 36% women.³

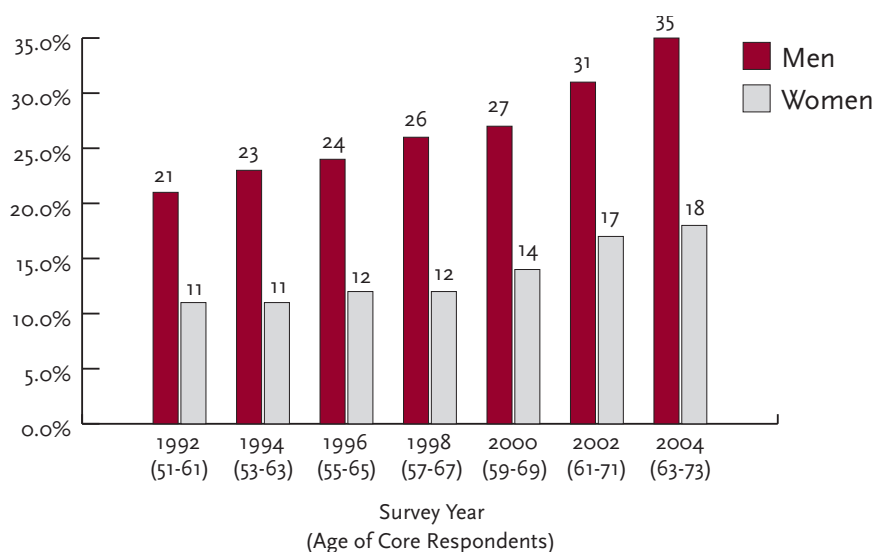
In a 2008 AARP survey, 31% of men and 36% of women ranked the ability to work from home as an essential part of their ideal job.⁴

Self-employment, Consulting, Contract Work

“Among workers 50 or more years old, wage and salaried employees are much more likely to be women (54%) than are self-employed independents (27%) and small business owners (37%).” Men in the same age group are more likely to report being self-employed independents (7%), compared to being wage and salaried employees (46%) and small business owners (63%).⁶

The prevalence of self-employed full-time career (FTC) workers has increased for both men and women. In 1992, 21% of male FTC workers were self-employed, and this number increased steadily to 35% in 2004. In 1992, 10% of female FTC workers were self-employed, and this number also rose steadily to 18% in 2004. (see figure 2)⁵

figure 2. Percentage Self-Employed Among Men and Women Who Held FTC Jobs in 1992



Source: Authors' calculations based on the Health and Retirement Study

Bridge Jobs and Phased Retirement

Among “war babies” (respondents born between 1942-1947) who had full-time career (FTC) jobs since age 50 and who had moved off their FTC job by 2004, 67% of the men and 71% of the women first moved to a bridge job.⁷

“Phasing after age 65—typically considered normal retirement age—is not uncommon, with 17% of phasers being age 65 or older. Women—who are more likely to phase than men—make up 60% of all phasers, even though they represent less than half of older workers,” according to Watson Wyatt.⁸

References

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