

Chapter Five

►► HOUSEHOLDS, WORK AND FLEXIBILITY Critical Review of Literature

SLOVENIA

[Pavle Sicherl and Matija Remec]

[Contents]

INTRODUCTION	107
1. THE DISCOURSE ON FLEXIBILITY IN SLOVENIA	108
1.1. Background: Ten years of transition	108
2. FLEXIBILITY OF TIME, PLACE AND CONDITION OF WORK	110
2.1. Quantitative dimensions and comparisons	110
2.2. Subjective attitudes	114
2.3. Policy orientation and regulations	116
2.4. The position of employers and labour unions	116
3. INFORMAL, DOMESTIC AND ADDITIONAL WORK	117
4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY AND WORK	118
CONCLUSIONS	120
ABBREVIATIONS	121
REFERENCES	121

[List of tables and figures]

Table 1.	Active population in Slovenia by registered sources 1987-1998	109
Table 2.	Distribution of persons in employment by LFS	110
Table 3.	Share of persons in employment with temporary job	111
Table 4.	Share of persons in employment working part time	112
Table 5.	Shift work of employed persons by sex, age and education	113
Table 6.	Night work of employed persons by sex, age and education.....	113
Table 7.	Frequency of work on Saturdays and Sundays and overtime work.....	113
Table 8.	Preferences for part time work of persons employed for full time	115
Table 9.	Preparedness for work on Saturdays and Sundays and night work	115
Table 10.	Preparedness for commuting to work of employed persons.....	115
Table 11.	Time use of employed persons	119

INTRODUCTION

In the preparation of the literature review for Slovenia several issues emerged. First, statistical data show that the quantitative importance of flexible work is lower than in the EU countries participating in the project. This means that for Slovenia it will be of great interest to learn about other experiences of flexibility, both positive and negative. Second, there is a major difference between the relative stability of the institutional framework in the EU countries as against the transitional character of institutions and economic trends in the candidate countries. Third, the same kinds of flexibility can arise for very different reasons. For instance, in candidate countries some forms of flexibility are there because of the necessity for individuals and households to survive and do not come into being as the result of a deliberate choice between family and work activities. Fourth, policy orientations and public opinion are not yet focused on the flexibility issue. Thus the discourse on flexibility is considerably less developed than in other countries under consideration and our literature review will not be as extensive as in the participating EU countries.

The review of the discourse on flexibility in Slovenia cannot be understood properly without

knowing the background of the far-reaching changes that have happened in the last decade. In this review, we begin by presenting an overview of these changes as a background to the discourses of flexibility presented in section 1. We then present statistical information and review the debate about flexibility of conditions of work, time and place. Section 2 further deals with the following issues: the subjective preference in relation to part time work and preparedness to work on Saturdays and Sundays; preparedness to commute; some general points related to policy orientations and regulations, as well as the role of social dialogue in the debates about changing patterns of work.

Information about informal, domestic and additional work (section 4) and on the relationship between family and work (section 5) is much scarcer. However, the time use survey by Statistical Office of Republic of Slovenia (SORS) in progress should deliver important new information on this issue. Section 5 provides a summary and general conclusions.

1. THE DISCOURSE ON FLEXIBILITY IN SLOVENIA

1.1. Background: Ten years of transition

Slovenia became an independent state in 1991 and has endured the simultaneous shocks of economic and political transition and the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia rather well. Compared with other newly independent states and/or other transition economies of the candidate countries of the EU, Slovenia has enjoyed some advantages and has suffered from some handicaps. Among the detrimental factors which made its transition much more difficult, are the consequences of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, that is, loss of the Yugoslav market, problems of succession, consequences of fighting in the former Yugoslavia as well as the breakdown of transport and communication services to South-Eastern Europe.

Among the factors beneficial for progress in transition were earlier experience with the self-management system, which was based on a quasi-market economy, and the fact that Yugoslavia was from the mid-1960s exposed to influences from democratic and market economies not only in trade, but also through the relatively free mobility of people. A number of these migrants were engaged in education or in temporary employment in western countries, which apart from foreign exchange remittances, provided important new skills and new ways of thinking (Sicherl, Kukar, 1996).

Over the last decade there are three developments that are most relevant for the discourse on flexibility. First, the high level of employment and job security in the earlier system with predominantly social ownership of capital in business activities (with the exception of agriculture) has left a strong influence on public opinion as to the rights of workers and expectation about the security of employment. Second, the fall in production and an even more drastic fall in employment during the transition depression have changed the situation in the labour market dramatically. Adjustment to the new situation was

not systematically helped by government policies. Active measures to support employment and fight unemployment were introduced rather late and the legislation on flexible work options is still rather rigid and still under discussion. Third, the new impetus for further steps in this direction comes from the effort to fulfill the conditions for EU entry in the soonest possible time.

Over the last decade the situation with respect to employment opportunities has changed radically. After 1989, all transition economies experienced a drop in production. However, the severity of the decline as well as the speed of the recovery was very variable. The decline in Slovenia was less than 20 per cent at the trough of the transition depression in 1992. The recovery was reasonably successful and the GDP level of 1989 was achieved again in 1997. However, the changes in the labour market were much more profound. In 1987 the activity rate (persons in employment as percentage of age group 15-64) from registered sources was 80.5% for men and 63.4% for women (SORS in Pirher et al. (2000)). This activity rate was at that time higher only in Denmark – for all other EU12 countries the activity rate was lower than in Slovenia.

The activity rate for men fell much more than activity rate for women. The former fell from 80.5% in 1987 to 73.8% in 1993 and to 67.2% in 1997. The activity rate for women fell from 63.4% in 1987 to 56.5% in 1993 and increased slightly to 58.1% in 1997. The decline of 250,000 of employed persons in companies and organizations in the period 1987-1997 was a great shock to a society that was used to enjoying secure and permanent jobs as well as substantial social benefits. Thus, the loss of the Yugoslav market after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and the dislocations in the transition process dramatically changed the employment situation.

Table 1. Active population in Slovenia by registered sources 1987-1998
(yearly average in 000)

	Employment in companies and organisations	Employed in small private sector	Farmers	Other self-employed persons	Persons in employment by registered sources	Registered unemployment	Active population by registered sources
1987	838	30	59	33	960	15	976
1988	831	31	61	35	957	21	979
1989	820	31	61	36	948	28	977
1990	786	32	58	39	915	45	959
1991	713	33	57	42	844	75	920
1992	659	33	56	44	792	103	894
1993	629	37	56	47	768	129	897
1994	606	42	56	49	752	127	879
1995	594	48	56	52	749	122	871
1996	581	54	56	54	749	120	865
1997	593	58	40	54	743	125	869
1998	592	61	41	52	745	126	871

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic Slovenia, ESS and Health Insurance Company of Slovenia, in Pirher, et al., (2000)

Registered unemployment surged from below 2% in 1987 to above 14% in 1993 of the active population. According to ILO methodology, which excludes registered unemployed that are counted as persons in employment and registered unemployed that are not actively searching for work, the unemployment rate in Slovenia of 7.5% in 1998 was still below that of EU15 average. Generally, however, there are discrepancies between the two main sources of statistics on the labour market: registered sources and labour force surveys (LFS). Nevertheless, both show drastic changes over the period of a few years. Some workers were able to take advantage of the possibility of early retirement and this helped them and the enterprises to overcome the transitional shock, but it meant an increase of about 140,000 additional retired persons over the decade between 1987 and 1997 and a tremendous long-term bur-

den for the welfare state. There was also a withdrawal of many long-term unemployed from the labour market who sought work in the informal economy or relied upon family support or upon social welfare assistance. The economic growth in the recovery period after 1993 was able to help Slovenia to attain the earlier levels of GDP by 1997, but it mainly took the form of jobless growth. Only in the last three years has the trend in employment been upward, and even then it is slow.

This is the background against which the discourse and statistics on flexible work in Slovenia should be understood. What we are witnessing is not a stable systematic effort towards more flexible arrangements, but rather a reaction to rapidly changing conditions as is explained in the next section.

2. FLEXIBILITY OF TIME, PLACE AND CONDITION OF WORK

2.1. Quantitative dimensions and comparisons

Flexible forms of work conditions

With the increasing number of forms of flexibility in the labour market there is no uniform standard for the classification of different forms of flexibility. This means that national practices and legislation provide categorisations, which are not internationally comparable and sometimes similar labels of categories mean different things in different countries. It is therefore difficult to make standardized comparisons cross nationally for the whole analysed period and we have to draw upon nationally distinctive classifications. One of the distinctions that we can make between forms of work is the distribution between paid employment, employers, self-employed persons and un-

paid family workers. This distribution has not changed much in the period 1993-1999. As seen in table 1 the greatest fall in employment in companies and organisations has occurred in the period 1989-1993. In that period the relationship between paid employment and the other two categories – employers/self employed and unpaid family workers – has changed considerably, but after 1993 this share has more or less stabilised. The share of persons in paid employment is lower than it was before the transition. In order to distinguish different forms of work conditions it is of interest to explore the trends in two main forms of flexible paid employment – temporary jobs and part time jobs.

Table 2. Distribution of persons in employment by LFS (per cent)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Persons in paid employment	84.6	83.0	86.7	86.0	86.6	86.7	86.6
Employers and self employed	12.2	12.3	12.8	12.9	12.9	13.0	12.7
Unpaid family workers	3.2	5.4	4.9	4.4	7.7	6.9	5.6

Source: SORS, Labour Market, Rapid Reports, various numbers

Temporary jobs

Compared with the EU countries participating in the HWF project (the UK; the Netherlands and Sweden), the share of those with temporary jobs in Slovenia is at about the same level as in Netherlands and Sweden, and higher than in the UK. In the literature there are some other expressions for these kinds of jobs, such as jobs of limited duration or fixed term employment. In this section data from LFS are used for the comparison of Slovenia with EU countries.

The Employment Service of Slovenia prepared an analysis of the importance of temporary jobs as one of the non-standard forms of employment in 1999. In this study, temporary jobs are shown to have become the most significant form

of new employment in Slovenia. On the one hand, temporary work brings about higher labour market flexibility, but on the other hand, it reduces the social security of employees. It has been reported that in last six years the demand for temporary workers has increased from 57.8% of all workers in year 1993, to 72.8% in 1998. In the spring and the autumn months there is an increased demand for temporary jobs (mainly in seasonal work), along with a generally increased demand for labour. In terms of gender, the share of women amounts to 52.2% of the total workers employed in temporary jobs, while the share of women in the total permanent employment is 46.8% (Verša, 1999).

Table 3. Share of persons in employment with temporary job (contract of limited duration, per cent)

	Slovenia	Netherlands	Sweden	UK
1993	6.3			
1994	7.1			
1995	7.5	9.3	11.0	6.3
1996	8.4	10.0	10.8	6.5
1997	10.9	9.3	11.0	6.3
1998	11.5	10.0	10.8	6.5
1999	11.2			

Source: For Slovenia 1999: SORS, Rapid Reports, No 146, July 2000, for earlier years: SORS, in Pirher et. al. 2000; for EU Countries for 1997, Eurostat, Labour Force Survey in Eurostat yearbook, A statistical eye on Europe, various years

The relationship between temporary work and permanent work opportunities varies according to qualifications and occupations. The number of temporary job openings is smaller for well-educated or/and highly qualified people, since it is in the interest of employers to employ such personnel for longer period of time so that their-on-the-job training and experience can be fully utilised. In 1998, the demand for temporary jobs for workers with lower levels of education was rated up to 84%, while demand for workers with a university degree was just 55% (IMAD, 1999).

The average duration of a temporary job decreased from 8 months in 1996 to 7 in 1997 and 1998, and it increased again in first half of 1999 to 7.2 months. This seems to be the lowest acceptable duration for job seekers and optimal for employers from an economic and organisational point of view. The most frequent duration of temporary jobs are to be found in three groups: less than 3 months (30.0% of the total), between 4 to 6 months (30.2%), and between 10 to 12 months (29.6%). Temporary work is very important for two groups of people: the unemployed and those seeking their first employment. In 1998 80% of unemployed persons and 88% of first time job seekers found temporary jobs. This is due to the lack of experience of first time job seekers and for

the unemployed it is in most cases related to their lack of appropriate education or their age. Many of these workers after the end of their temporary job again become unemployed and move in and out of employment (Verša, 1996, 1999).

Part time employment

The statistics on part time employment depend on the criteria used for the definition of part time employment. Data for Slovenia in the table comparing Slovenia with EU countries participating in the project are based on the definition of the Statistical Office of Slovenia that in the LFS uses the criteria for part time as working less than 36 hours per week. This is not necessarily the same definition as in some other countries where this limit is set at fewer hours. Therefore, the number of persons with explicit contracts of employment with shorter working hours is considerably lower than that based on the criteria used by SORS (Kramberger, A., Ignjatovič, M. (2000)). Thus the conclusion that the share of persons in employment working part time in Slovenia is very much below that of EU15, and even more below that of the three compared EU countries, is further strengthened.

Table 4. Share of persons in employment working part time (per cent)

	Slovenia	EU15	Netherlands	Sweden	UK
1991		13.7	32.6		21.9
1992			34.5		23.0
1993	5.3	14.7	35.0		23.3
1994	5.4		36.4		23.8
1995	5.7	16.0	37.3	25.0	24.0
1996	6.7	16.4	38.1	24.5	24.6
1997	7.2	16.9	38.0	24.5	24.9
1998	7.3				
1999	6.1				

Source: SORS, Labour Force Surveys, Rapid Reports, various numbers

For EU Countries for 1997, Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, results 1997 in Eurostat yearbook, A statistical eye on Europe, edition 98/99, p. 136-139 and SORS, Statistical yearbook, various years.

One of the interesting features of the Slovenian situation with regard to part time employment in comparison with the three EU countries under consideration is the gender composition of the part time employment. In Slovenia in 1999 the share of part time employment for men was 5.2% and for women 7.2%. In EU15 the share of women employed part time as per cent of all employed women was 32.4%, in Netherlands 67.9%, in UK 44.9% and in Sweden 41.4%. (Eurostat, 1999). Thus, in the EU countries analysed the gap between part time employment of women and part time employment of men is very large, while in Slovenia the difference is very small. This will be an interesting issue to study further in the project.

It is clear that in Slovenia the labour market changes did not bring about many changes to flexible forms of work, and that also the potential importance of part time employment has not yet materialised. It seems that in Slovenia, part time employment manifests itself mostly as an individual strategy of employment under exceptional circumstances. Thus, the most frequent reasons for part time employment are illness, handicaps and partial retirement. In many cases such persons get additional income from social security sources (Verša, 1999). The regulations with re-

spect to part time employment and retirement rights are rigid and do not stimulate either the employers or the workers to make such arrangements. This is a serious obstacle for the use of part time employment as a tool in general rather than only in the individual cases mentioned above.

Flexibility of time

Tables 5, 6 and 7 indicate the proportion of employed persons that are involved in shift work, night work and Saturday, Sunday and overtime work. With respect to part time work, which was discussed in section 2.1.1.2, it is of interest to explore a distinction between full time and part time work for all categories in Table 2. Kramberger and Ignjatovič (2000) analysed individual responses from the LFS for the period 1991-1999. They found that 68.9% of persons in employment were employed full time in permanent jobs, only 1.8% were employed in permanent jobs part time, and 8.2% were employed full time in temporary jobs, with 0.4% employed part time in temporary jobs in 1999. The rest were employers, self employed, family workers and others. This means that there is ample scope for introducing a range of flexible forms of work time.

Table 5. Shift work of employed persons by sex, age and education, %

	Never	Sometimes	Regularly	Total
Total	67.9	6.8	25.3	100
by sex				
<i>Men</i>	68.3	7.1	24.6	100
<i>Women</i>	67.4	6.6	26.0	100
by education				
<i>Elementary school or less</i>	65.1	8.4	26.5	100
<i>Vocational school</i>	58.8	7.8	33.4	100
<i>Upper secondary school</i>	68.6	6.3	25.2	100
<i>College, university and more</i>	88.0	3.9	8.1	100

Source: SORS (1999)

Table 6. Night work of employed persons by sex, age and education, %

	Never	Sometimes	Regularly	Total
Total	75.6	12.7	11.7	100
by sex				
<i>Men</i>	69.2	17.5	13.3	100
<i>Women</i>	82.4	7.5	10.1	100
by education				
<i>Elementary school or less</i>	72.2	11.2	16.5	100
<i>Vocational school</i>	74.2	12.9	13.0	100
<i>Upper secondary school</i>	77.9	11.8	10.4	100
<i>College, university and more</i>	78.8	15.8	5.3	100

Source: SORS (1999)

Table 7. Frequency of work on Saturdays and Sundays and overtime work, %

	Never	Sometimes	Regularly	Total
Saturday work	34.6	42.2	23.2	100
Sunday work	66.9	20.8	12.2	100
Overtime work	41.3	44.2	14.5	100

Source: SORS (1999)

Flexible place of work

The distribution of work places has several dimensions. From the point of an individual it is important to consider the distance between the place of work and his/her home, on the one hand, and the distribution of places of his/her work activity (at home, in one place, in several places,

etc.) on the other. From the point of view of local, regional or national development, it is relevant to study the spatial distribution of working places in relation to places of residence.

In Slovenia the population is residentially rather dispersed, while the working places are much more concentrated in towns. This means,

that there is substantial daily commuting to work. According to SORS at the end of 1999 there were data for 722 890 employed persons, enabling a comparison between the municipality in which they work and the municipality in which they reside. Of those 279 946 (38.7%) were employed in different municipalities than the municipality of their residence. Labour migration between municipalities is usually limited to short distances, so it takes place mostly with neighbouring municipalities. The municipality of Ljubljana is the only one that attracts a labour force from the whole territory of the region. Beside that, it extends its gravitational pull to other regions, especially to Gorenjska region. The gravitational area of the municipality of Ljubljana comprises 30% of the territory of Slovenia and 38% of the total popula-

2.2. Subjective attitudes

In 1999 a survey was carried out on a sample of 2000 persons, age 16 years and older, who were either employed or unemployed and actively seeking work. It excluded self-employed persons, farmers, unpaid family workers and persons working on contracts or doing casual work (SORS, 1999). In this survey several questions were posed about attitudes to the increase or decrease in working time, shift work, night work, and work on Saturdays and Sundays. The share of persons employed full time that indicated a preference for part time work was 16%: 14% of men and 19% of women. Age differences showed that 40% of those aged 50 and over and 24% of those aged 16 to 29 expressed this preference. Also people with the highest qualifications are more inclined to want part time employment than others. Preparedness to work on Saturdays, Sundays and night work among those that are not

tion. There are only four other regional centers of employment (Maribor, Celje, Novo mesto and Murska Sobota), while all other municipalities with concentrations of jobs remain just local centers (Dolenc, 2000).

Information on flexibility of place is very scarce. In interviewing enterprises it has been found that teleworking can be performed in almost one half of enterprises, i.e. in the majority of enterprises, which have access to the Internet. Approximately one half of these enterprises already use teleworking. Internet connects their employees to their enterprise and they work from home at least a few hours per month. However, in most cases teleworking is restricted to one or two persons in the enterprise (RIS, 1999).

already sometimes or regularly working under these arrangements is below 20%. It is of interest that preparedness for commuting to work of employed persons is high, 60% of them expressed readiness to commute (67% of men and 51% of women). The readiness to commute increased with the level of education and decreased with age. For 82% of employed persons, a commuting time of between one and two hours was acceptable. Also, 28% of the employed persons indicated that they would prefer shorter working times at the same monthly wage to the same working time with an increased monthly wage (SORS, 1999). This means that there is substantial scope for increased flexibility also from the point of view of a large number of employed persons and that more flexible institutional arrangements with appropriate safeguards for workers rights would be of interest for both employers and employees.

Table 8. Preferences for part time work of persons employed for full time, %

	Part time employment	Full time employment	Total
Total	16.0	84.0	100
by sex			
<i>Men</i>	13.7	86.3	100
<i>Women</i>	18.6	81.4	100
by age			
16-29 years	24.0	76.0	100
30-49 years	9.3	90.7	100
50 years and over	39.5	60.5	100
by education			
<i>Elementary school or less</i>	17.4	82.6	100
<i>Vocational school</i>	17.1	82.9	100
<i>Upper secondary school</i>	10.3	89.8	100
<i>College, university and more</i>	22.0	78.0	100

Source: SORS (1999)

Table 9. Preparedness for work on Saturdays and Sundays and night work of employed persons, %

	Yes	No	Already work (sometimes, regularly)	Total
Saturday work	17.2	17.4	65.4	100
Sunday work	17.3	49.7	33.1	100
Night work	20.0	54.9	24.4	100

Source: SORS (1999)

Table 10. Preparedness for commuting to work of employed persons, %

	Yes	No	Total
Total	60.4	39.6	100
by sex			
<i>Men</i>	68.8	31.2	100
<i>Women</i>	51.4	48.6	100
by age			
16-29 years	67.9	32.1	100
30-49 years	60.7	39.3	100
50 years and over	43.4	56.6	100
by education			
<i>Elementary school or less</i>	46.6	53.4	100
<i>Vocational school</i>	65.7	34.3	100
<i>Upper secondary school</i>	68.1	31.9	100
<i>College, university and more</i>	72.5	27.5	100

Source: SORS (1999)

2.3. Policy orientation and regulations

The importance of work flexibility is widely recognized. This is the case for employers, employees, family members, Government, and the academic community. However, their focus and interests vary very much. In general terms it is recognized that a more flexible situation on the labour market is of importance for safeguarding working places and providing new employment opportunities. Prešern (1998) mentions five elements of European and Slovenian inflexibility: rigidity of wages, reluctance of the labour force, restrictive collective agreements, duration of work and worker qualifications in relation to the needs of the firms. Lipičnik (2000) points to various kinds of flexibility that are connected with the work organisation of the firm and emphasises the importance of flexible work for timely adjustments to the new situation on the product markets. Kajzer (1996) examines in more detail the importance of labour market flexibility on unemployment.

In discussions of economic policy attention is called to the fact that if and when Slovenia enters the EMU, one of the alternative mechanisms for adjustment will be lost and the burden of adjustments will fall to a greater extent on the levels of activity, employment and wages. This means that the flexibility of the labour market and of the labour force will be even more important than now

(Lavrač, 1998). Whether Slovenia will be full member of the EU earlier or later has further repercussions for this issue. It is expected that an earlier full membership would, among other things, increase the flexibility of the labour market (Svetličič, 1999). The Government has been aware of the need to increase work flexibility, but until now no general consensus between employers, labour unions and Government on this issue has been reached. Further discussions about such provisions in the new draft labour legislation are expected to continue with the new Government and in the new Parliament that was elected in 2000.

The issues of work flexibility are much broader than the above mentioned flexibilisation within firms or in relation to the macroeconomic framework. On the one hand, they are related to the terms and conditions of employment attached to such jobs, and the status of the people involved. Working time is a complex economic and sociological phenomenon (Verša, 1994, Svetlik, 1994). On the other hand, flexibility of work can have both positive and negative effects on the family life and household strategies. On this issue there is much more material in literature from other countries; in Slovenia there is hardly any systematic comprehensive treatment of this.

2.4. The position of employers and labour unions

It has been evident that most of the debates considering flexibility and work from employers and labour unions are related to two things: the process of entering the EU and the forthcoming Labour Law. The first factor – entering the EU – focuses mainly on consistency with European labour laws. In the second case, employers are looking for ways of liberalising employment regulations and are critical of the forthcoming draft outline of the new Labour Law in this respect. They believe that the draft of the new law does not foresee new work forms, which are well estab-

lished in Europe, and are a consequence of globalization: the need for a flexible labour market, the need for segmentation of the market and the information revolution. On the other hand, labour unions are afraid that employers are interpreting work flexibility too liberally, which may lead to new ways of exploiting workers and will result in even greater social and economic divisions.

Back in 1997, when the 1997 draft of the Labour Law was published, the first critical remarks from employers' side emerged. Some of those remarks were connected with flexibility of work.

Some suggestions mentioned that the paragraph on fixed time work (temporary jobs) should be erased, since such contracts were limited to a maximum duration of 3 years. Employers suggest that this could lead to even higher unemployment and does not fit with demands for labour market flexibility. There was also a suggestion that a cut of weekly working hours (from 42 to 40) for fixed time jobs (temporary jobs) would be introduced in the new law. A joint agreement at the roundtable of employers' organizations was that the new law does not take into account the need for additional flexibility, which could lead to the creation of new employment (Potočnik, 1997).

The draft of the new Labour Law under preparation in 2000 once again provoked comments by employers suggesting that it raises labour cost and reduces flexibility of employment. In their opinion it would lead to decreasing competitiveness of companies and thus to a further reduction in job vacancies. The demand to harmonize the new Labour Law with EU legislation was getting even stronger. While employers argue that jobs of limited duration are important in view of uncertainty in the market, labour unions emphasise that employers are sometimes misusing

this form of employment to reduce the rights of the workers. Nevertheless, all sides of the debate were aware that a temporary job is an important form of flexible employment.

At the same time employers mention that part time jobs should be used more frequently as a work option. This would offer broader work options for those who are keen to telework and can support the situation of young parents with family obligations (Mišič, 1999). Labour unions were not convinced by these arguments. One example of the obstacles placed in the way of the recognition of part time work is that the current legislation does not allow part time workers to be allowed to apply for bank loans (*ibid*).

In 2000 negotiations between Government, employers and labour unions continued throughout the summer, with no further progress. Employers are of the opinion that all crucial questions are still open. Even though the preparation of new Labour Law is in the last phase, employers believe that the consensus has not been reached yet on the following issues: flexibility of temporary job options and overtime work, and actual full work time schedule (Kern, 2000).

3. INFORMAL, DOMESTIC AND ADDITIONAL WORK

With regard to the informal economy, it is estimated that (Kukar et al., 1994) about 26.5 per cent of the active population are active in hidden or informal activities. Converted into the number of full-time employees (FTE) a figure of 80,000 persons (or 9.6 per cent of the labour force) was estimated. Altogether the scope of the hidden economy (unreported and untaxed incomes) might represent 17 to 21 per cent of the registered GDP in Slovenia in 1993. However, the hidden activities are a bigger problem for tax authorities than for the statistical evidence (Sicherl, Kukar, 1996).

It is obvious that the work in the informal economy is an important way of earning some income for unemployed and discouraged persons in the transition depression. Under the circum-

stances, informal work represents a means of survival when the opportunities for formal forms of work have declined substantially. It is very difficult to estimate the size of the informal work in the economy, but it is no doubt substantial. There is also some tradition in helping friends and/or neighbours with maintenance, building and repair of dwellings and with agricultural work. In the countryside there are many instances where people combine either formal or informal work outside the household with agricultural work. Since the economic recovery there are more opportunities for formal employment and the need for informal work may be decreasing. In Slovenia the informal work by illegal immigrants is unimportant. This type of mobility is probably influ-

encing the labour market situation in several EU countries (as indicated by Verlič, 1999), but Slovenia is at present only under pressure from illegal migrants using it as a transit route on their way to EU countries.

Table 11 gives some preliminary indication of the distribution of paid work and domestic work, although it is based on a very small sized sample in 1996. For men, paid work accounted for 41 hours each week and domestic work for 17 hours. For women, the figures were 34 hours and 30 hours respectively. While in the household the work of women is dominant, in Slovenia the position of women in the labour market is relatively close to that of men as indicated by one of the highest activity rates for women in comparison with EU countries (surpassed only by Scandinavian countries). Women make up 47.4% of all persons in paid employment and the largest propor-

tion of students and graduates at university level, which may help with their future position in the labour market. Yet they continue to shoulder a double burden of domestic as well as paid work.

One additional motivation for informal work in Slovenia, both for employers and for the workers is the structure of the tax system. The negative feature of the Slovenian tax system is that there is relatively high personal income tax and high social security contributions as a percentage of labour costs (Stanovnik, 2000). The high burden of retirement payments in a situation of a substantially changed pensioners/employees ratio and existing standards of health and educational services indirectly influence the amount of public spending and is unlikely to reduce the incentives to participate in the informal economy under the current regulatory framework.

4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY AND WORK

The analysis of the relationship between family and work is a very complex undertaking. It is influenced by conditions in the labour market on the one hand, and by the objective circumstances of the economic, social and demographic conditions of the household along with the subjective preferences of the members of the household, on the other hand. At this stage of the project only separate aspects of this problem can be commented upon.

Time use studies are an important source of information about the division of labour between men and women and the revealed preferences for time use as one of the aspects of a household strategy. The Statistical Office of the Republic of

Slovenia has been executing a time use survey, with a sample of more than 4000 persons, interviewing the respective portions of the whole sample over 4 quarters. The last period of interviews will be January 1–March 30, 2001. By the end of this year the results of the first quarter of interviews will be published by SORS, which will represent an important source of information in this respect. At the moment some preliminary results of a pilot phase of 300 interviews in 1996 are available. These results should not be considered as representative for Slovenia as a whole, but they can still serve as an indication of orders of magnitude.

Table 11. Time use of employed persons (men and women) / Hours per week

	Men	Women
Paid work	41	34
Household and family together	17	30
- Housekeeping	9	24
- Maintenance, building and repairs	5	1
- Taking care of children and adults	2	4
- Shopping and services	1	1
Sleeping	56	57
Consumption of meals, personal hygiene	14	12
Free time together	30	26
- TV	14	10
- Reading	3	3
- Companionship	7	8
- Sports activities and activities in nature	3	2
- Other	3	3
Travel time	10	9
Total (hours)	168	168

Source: SORS (1999a), results are based on a pilot survey of 300 households in 1996, which should not be considered representative for Slovenia as a whole.

The greatest difference in the time allocation between men and women is in housekeeping work, with 9 hours per week for men and 24 hours per week for women. On the other hand, the difference in hours of paid work is much less pronounced: 41 hours for men and 34 hours for women. A significant portion of time is allocated also for travel for both men and women. Bearing in mind the problems with this survey, two points stand out. First, women on average use nearly as much time for household and family related work as for paid work. Second, at the same time the involvement of women in paid employment is substantial and the time they devote to paid work reaches more than 80% of the respective hours of work per week for men. As mentioned earlier, women represent 47.5% of persons in paid employment.

While one should wait for more accurate assessments of the distribution of work outside and within the household from the time use survey in progress, other statistics indicate that the position of women in the labour market in Slovenia is close to that of men. The conditions that promote such involvement of women stem predominantly

from the policy orientation of the former socialist self-management system. It placed great importance upon the provision of facilities that would enable women to take part in paid employment. This included, among other things, building kindergarten facilities, providing for extended supervision of children in schools, organising meals in enterprises, organisations and schools, and providing a long period of paid maternal leave. These facilities have contributed to the fact that women have not fared worse than men even during the period of transition depression. Furthermore, the activity rate for women aged 25 to 49 is practically the same as for men of the same age, while a decade ago it was less. However, there are now also some examples of firms having refrained from hiring mothers with young children in order to avoid these regulations. A more flexible and even-handed set of work regulations and an increased openness towards flexible employment arrangements on the side of employers and employees might help to overcome some of these existing problems. This would facilitate the reconciliation of paid work and domestic work by members of the household.

CONCLUSIONS

Public opinion about flexibility has not yet crystallized in Slovenia. Thus the discourse on work flexibility is mainly lacking and the old regulations regarding employment tend to promote rigidity rather than flexibility. Nor has been reached an agreement yet about flexibility in the process of social dialogue between employers and labour unions, though the social dialogue is continuing.

Like other transition countries, Slovenia is facing a situation of rapid change in the labour market and in the institutions surrounding it. Despite being also faced with the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Slovenia has come through the transition relatively well and employment has picked up since the deepest depression point in the early 1990s.

There are two main flexible forms of employment in Slovenia: part time work and temporary work. The share of temporary jobs is similar to that in EU countries, but the share of part time work is much lower. Flexibilisation has therefore meant mainly the introduction of temporary work contracts. These temporary work contracts are more advantageous for some workers than for others: for the unemployed and for beginning workers they do not lead to permanent jobs in the same way as for some other categories of workers.

There is substantial involvement in the informal economy that reflects the survival responses of people undergoing the stress of transition with the drop in employment and rise in unemployment. It is likely that that more flexibility is found in this sector.

However, flexibility of place is in some respects well developed in Slovenia. There is substantial daily commuting to work although it is usually limited to short distances. The municipality of Ljubljana is the only one that attracts labour force from a much larger area; its gravitational

area comprises 30% of the territory of Slovenia and 38% of total population. However, attitudinal surveys indicate considerable willingness to commute also longer distances.

There would seem to be considerable potential scope for flexibilisation to judge by attitudinal surveys. Employees were favourably inclined towards more time flexibility. From the side of employers there is also an interest in liberalizing employment regulations to improve flexibility. Flexibility is therefore seen positively by a range of different stakeholders, although, they perhaps support different kinds of flexibility.

An interesting feature of the Slovenian situation is that of women in both public and private spheres. Women form 47.4% of the labour force and the largest proportion of University students. The share of women in employment is one of the highest in the European Union and moreover most of them work full time. However, they also do most of the domestic work according to time budget surveys, putting in substantially more hours than men in the home. Their situation is helped by the rather generous benefits, maternity leave, kindergartens and employment regulations that support working mothers. Unlike in other former socialist countries, these have not been cut. This perhaps explains why the differences between men's and women's participation in part time work found throughout the EU is not found so much in Slovenia – their rates of participation are almost the same. It will be interesting to see if Slovenia manages to maintain this high level of welfare decommodification in the process of further Europeanisation and modernization of the labour market.

The accession of Slovenia into the European Union along with the passing of new labour market legislation will likely bring new changes in the introduction of flexibility.

ABBREVIATIONS

ESS – Employment Service of Slovenia
 ETF – European Training Foundation
 HWF – Household, Work and Flexibility
 IMAD, ZMAR – Institute of Macroeconomic
 Analysis and Development

LFS – Labour Force Survey
 SICENTER – Socio-economic Indicators Center
 SORS – Statistical Office of Republic of Slovenia

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