

Families and moonlighting

Henry Pold

Time. We never seem to have enough. Today, with dual-earner families the norm (Chawla, 1992; Charrette, 1995), family time has become even rarer. Adding to the time squeeze for a small but rapidly growing minority of families has been the increasing incidence of multiple jobholding (Chart).

Among employed persons in 1994, almost 5% held a second job, but among families with at least one employed spouse, the incidence of moonlighting¹ (one spouse, or even both, holding two jobs) was nearly 7%, up from 5% in 1984 (Table 1). Spouses in these families must schedule household activities around not only the additional job hours, but the time needed to get to and from the second job.

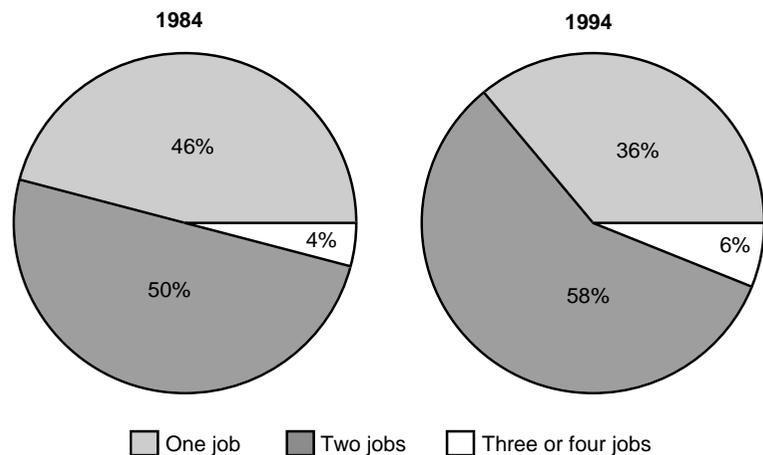
Who are these harried families? Using family-level estimates from the Labour Force Survey, this analysis divides families into three age groups – 20 to 34, 35 to 49, and 50 and over – based on the age of the reference person² and classifies them as to the presence of children.

Impact of children and age

Overall, in 1994 the incidence of moonlighting among families was slightly higher when children were present – 7.0% versus 6.6% – but the rates differed noticeably with the age of the reference person. Among families with the reference person aged 20 to 34, those without children had a higher moonlighting rate (9.1%) than those with children (6.6%). In contrast, moonlighting rates for families headed by older reference persons (35 to 49 and 50 and over) were higher for those with children than for those without children. Among families

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Chart
By 1994, almost two-thirds of husband-wife families* held two or more jobs.



Source: Labour Force Survey

* With at least one employed spouse and not counting other employed family members

with children the highest rate was for the middle age group (7.5%).

Over the ten years, the greatest increase in moonlighting was among young families. Although rates also increased for the other two age groups, the increments were smaller, reflecting the tendency for moonlighting to decline at older ages for families without children.

Moonlighting is usually done by just one spouse. Even so, among the 362,000 families involved in 1994, both spouses in 34,000 of them held two jobs – more than an 80% increase over 1984 when the number was 19,000 out of 241,000. Almost two-thirds of these families had children at home.

Work and more work

In 1994, 302,000 dual-earner families had at least one moonlighting

spouse. In nearly all of these families at least one spouse was employed full time, and in over half of them both spouses were employed full time (Table 2).

Moonlighting combined with dual full-time employment was highest for the youngest families and lowest for families with a reference person aged 50 or over. Nonetheless, over the last ten years the incidence of moonlighting among families in which both spouses had full-time main jobs increased for all three age groups of families.

Conclusion

Over the last decade, the number of moonlighting families jumped by more than 50% – reaching 362,000 in 1994. The families most likely to moonlight are young and have no children at home. But regardless of

**Table 1
Incidence of moonlighting families**

	Total		With children		Without children	
	1984	1994	1984	1994	1984	1994
Age of reference person	%					
All ages*	5.0	6.9	5.3	7.0	4.4	6.6
20 to 34	5.2	7.6	5.1	6.6	5.2	9.1
35 to 49	5.8	7.3	5.9	7.5	5.5	6.8
50 or over	3.7	5.3	4.1	6.1	3.3	4.8

Source: Labour Force Survey
* Includes 15 to 19 year-olds

**Table 2
Moonlighting families**

	Two-parent families		With children		Without children	
	1984	1994	1984	1994	1984	1994
Employment status of spouses	'000					
Total	241	362	173	237	67	125
One spouse employed	60	60	44	40	15	20
Both spouses employed	181	302	129	197	52	105
Both full time at main job	95	166	64	102	31	64
Only one full time at main job	78	125	61	89	17	36
Both part time at main job	8	11	4	6	4	5

Source: Labour Force Survey

the age of the parents or the presence of children, the incidence of moonlighting among families rose over the period. □

■ Notes

1 The incidence of moonlighting will always be higher at the family level because the same number of multiple jobholders is divided by a smaller number (there being fewer families than there are individuals).

2 In a given household, one member is designated as the reference person and other members are coded in relation to this person. In a husband-wife family, either spouse may be coded as the reference person.

■ References

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