

Is there evidence of a wage penalty to female part-time employment in South Africa?

Dorrit Posel and Colette Muller
Economics, University of KwaZulu-Natal
posel@ukzn.ac.za and mullerc2@ukzn.ac.za

July 2007

Paper prepared for the 2007 ESSA Conference, Johannesburg

Abstract

In this paper, we investigate female part-time employment in South Africa. Using household survey data for South Africa from 1995 to 2004, we show that women are over-represented in part-time employment, and that the growth in part-time work has been an important feature of the feminisation of the labour force. In contrast to many studies of part-time work in other countries, however, we find evidence of a significant wage premium to female part-time employment. The premium is robust also to fixed effects estimations using Labour Force Survey panel data from 2001 to 2004, where controlling for unobservable differences increases its size. The premium persists with different hourly thresholds defining part-time employment and when we account for possible reporting errors in hours worked.

JEL classification: J21; J22; J31