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# Improving Work Schedules in Hourly Jobs

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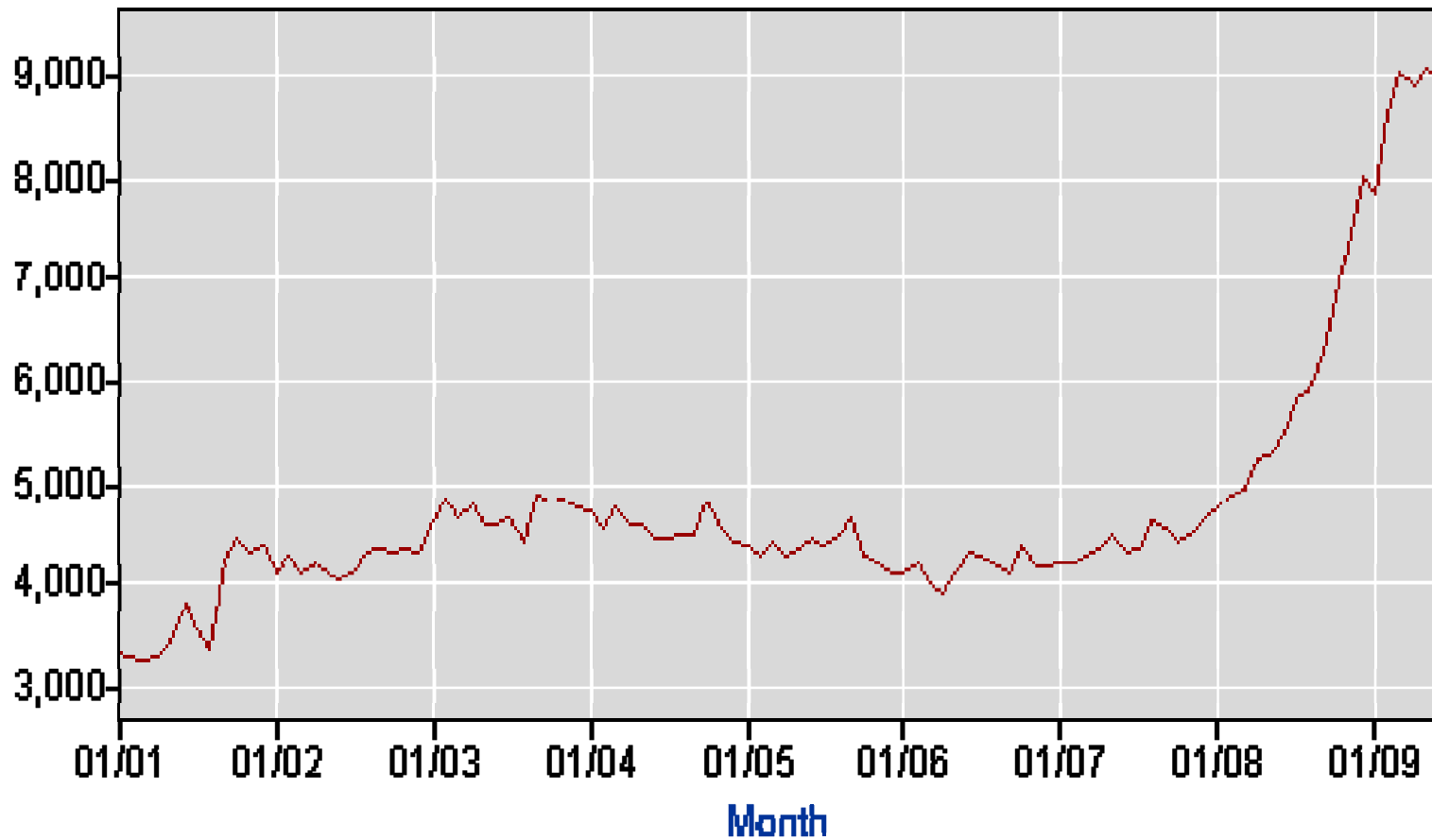
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# Acknowledgements

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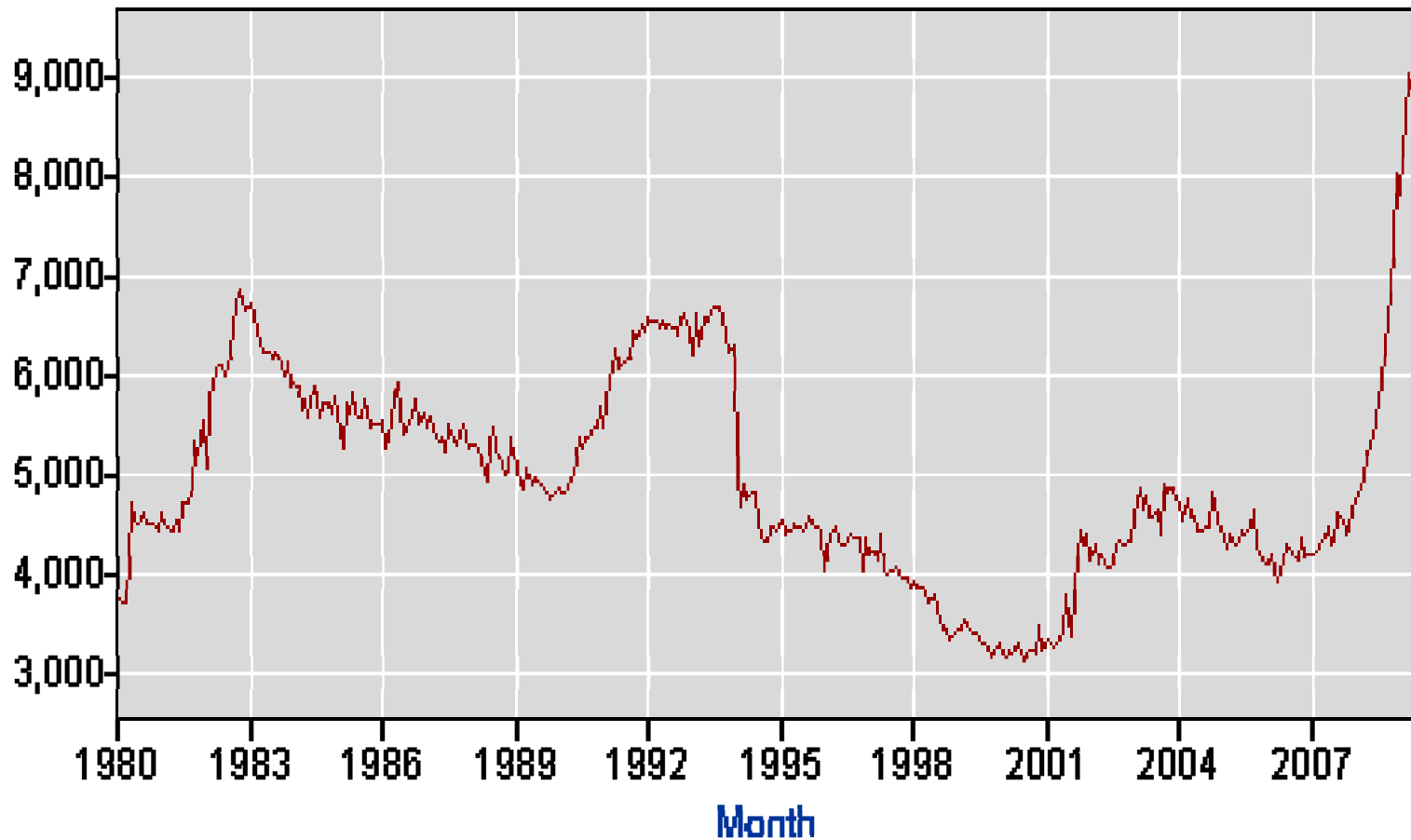
# Involuntary Part-time

2001-2009 (BLS – Numbers in thousands)



# Involuntary Part-time

1980-2009 (BLS – Numbers in thousands)



# Work Hour Preferences by Actual

**Work Hours** 2001 CPS data (Golden & Gebreselassie, 2007)

Men & Women	Same Hrs	Fewer Hrs	More Hrs
<b>1 to 14 hrs</b>	62.1%	5.1%	<b>32.9%</b>
<b>15 to 29 hrs</b>	60.3	6.0	<b>33.7</b>
<b>30 to 34</b>	58.9	8.1	<b>33.1</b>
<b>35 to 39</b>	65.0	7.7	28.3
<b>40 hrs</b>	69.8	5.6	24.5
<b>41 to 48</b>	66.6	8.1	25.3
<b>49 to 59</b>	69.7	9.6	20.6
<b>60 or more</b>	66.1	13.3	20.7

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## What keeps hourly workers from working “enough” hours?

- **The answer: Demand for labor flexibility on the part of employers.**
  - **Labor flexibility is the ability of employers to readily adjust the number of employees and their work hours.**
  - **Maintaining a close link between employees’ work hours and variations in demand enables employers to contain, if not minimize, outlays for wages.**
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**Goal today: Highlight scheduling practices that front-line managers use to contain labor costs in hourly jobs**

- **National women's apparel retailer**
  - **Cluster-randomized experiment to evaluate the effects of improved scheduling practices on sales associates' well-being and work performance**
  - **Practices are consistent with research on firms in several industries, i.e., hospitality, transportation, financial services, and retail**
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# Staffing practice: High headcounts

- **US employers tend to keep headcount – the number of workers on the payroll – high, especially in part-time hourly jobs.**
  - **Pool of workers whose hours can expand or contract depending on business needs and who can be slotted to work short shifts during peak business times.**
  - **How can do this? Low-skilled, hourly workers come with few fixed costs.**
  - **The more employees on the payroll, the fewer hours available, on average, for each employee.**
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## **Scheduling practices: Fluctuating and unpredictable work hours**

- **Work schedules posted a few days before the workweek begins**
  - **Last minute adjustments to posted schedules**
  - **Real-time adjustments during the day**
  - **Results in *unpredictable* as well as unstable work hours**
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## **Maintain loose link between job status and number of work hours**

- **Minimum number of hours in hourly jobs rarely guaranteed by employers**
  - **Part-time jobs especially variable**
  - **Full-time “flex”**
  - **Variation in the number of hours worked has increased by 23% since the 1970s.**
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## Emphasis on “Open Availability”

- ❑ 94 percent *agreed* with the statement “I try to hire Sales Associates with maximum availability.”
  - ❑ 79 percent *agreed* with the statement: “I give more hours to associates who have greater availability.”
  - ❑ 89 percent *disagreed* with the statement “I give more hours to sales associates who seem to really need the money.”
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## Recap: Work schedules in hourly jobs

- **Not “enough” hours (underemployment)**
  - Informal lay-offs; “no hour” jobs
- **Fluctuating work hours**
  - Days of the week
  - Time of day or shift
  - Length of shift or time worked on a given day
- **Unpredictable work hours (and income)**

***At risk of an earnings penalty when put  
constraints on availability for work***

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# Potential targets for intervention (can vary by firm and job)

## ■ **Stability**

- ❑ Guarantee a minimum number of hours of work per week
- ❑ Provide a set schedule in which a proportion of work hours is guaranteed to be the same every week
- ❑ Guarantee work on certain days or shifts

## ■ **Predictability**

- ❑ Provide work schedules to employees with greater advance notice
- ❑ Curb adjustments to posted schedules

## ■ **Flexibility (employee control)**

- ❑ Allow workers input into their work schedule without reducing the number of hours they work
- ❑ Clarify and codify flexibility options so that all workers have equal access to a schedule that fits with their needs