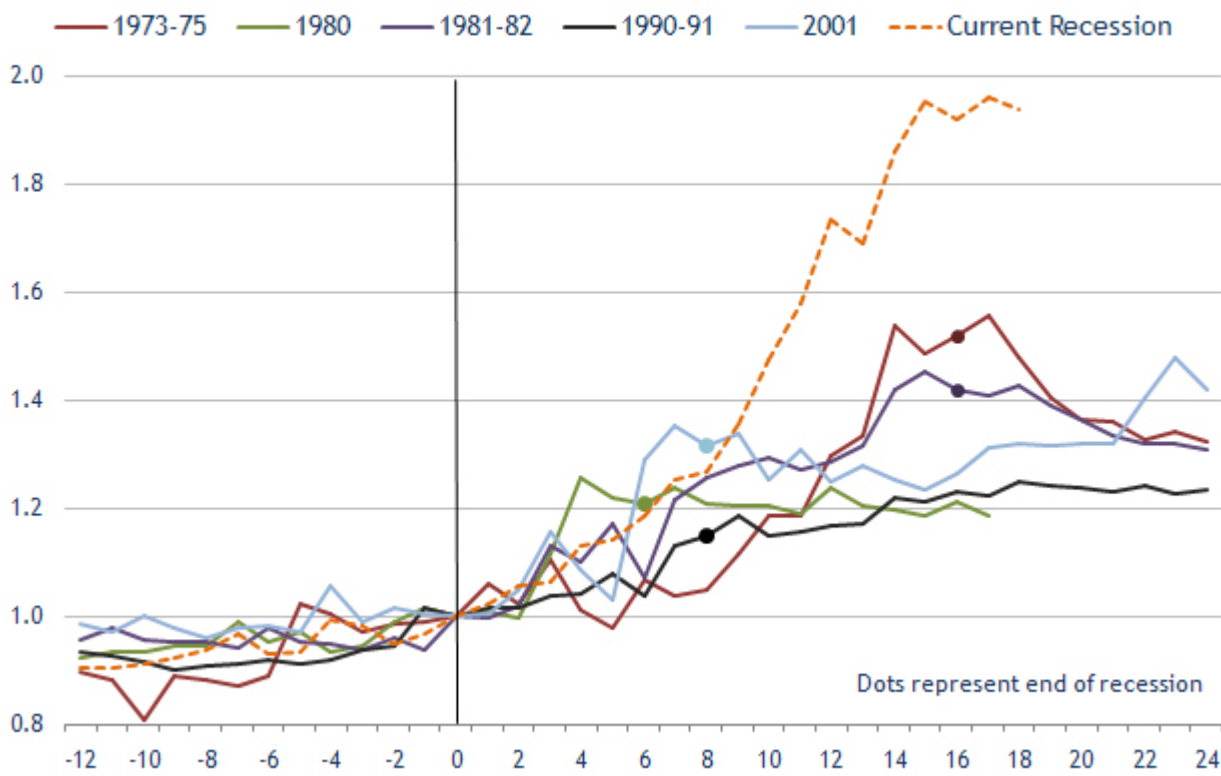


August 14, 2009

### What's really different about this recession?

The short answer to the question posed in the title of this blog post is, of course, "lots of things." One of those things is featured in the latest edition of [Economic Highlights](#), the Atlanta Fed's weekly digest of newly released economic statistics. Here, specifically, is a chart reflecting the trajectories of individuals working part-time for economic reasons in the current and past recessions.

Part-Time for Economic Reasons Indexed to Start of Recession=1



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

As the chart clearly shows, the increase in people reporting that they are involuntarily working part-time rather than full-time is considerably higher in this recession than in past recessions. Although the increase in these workers has moderated some since the spring of this year, the number of people in the category of working part-time for economic reasons remains at 8.8 million, well above the level of past contractions in both absolute and relative terms.

This recession has given us many puzzles to mull over. Now we can add the unusual pattern of part-time work to the list.

Side note: We invite you to check out [SouthPoint](#), the Atlanta Fed's new weekly blog on regional economic conditions in the Southeast.

By Menbere Shiferaw, senior economic research analyst at the Atlanta Fed

August 14, 2009 in [Business Cycles](#), [Labor Markets](#) | [Permalink](#)