

Chapter 6

Working Time for Married Couples in 28 Countries

Carla Medalia and Jerry A. Jacobs

Gender roles continue to change throughout the world as reflected in women's labor force participation, educational attainment, age at marriage, divorce rates and fertility levels. Because countries vary in the speed and nature of these transformations, a comparative approach is particularly well suited to studying them. By employing a cross-national analysis, recent research on work and the family has improved our understanding of how the gendered division of paid labor affects the family and society. The time spent on the job by various family members affects the character and extent of work-family conflict as well as gender inequality within the family and economy. While most research in this area focuses on a small sample of mostly industrial countries, this study casts a wider net.

In their analysis of 10 countries, Jacobs and Gornick (2002) and Jacobs and Gerson (2004), examined the length of the workweek for married couples as well as individuals (see also Nock & Kingston, 1988). Furthermore, they reported the fraction of individuals and couples who put in especially long workweeks. Like many studies on working time, the sample of countries they analyzed was limited to all highly developed and industrialized nations in North America and Western Europe. In the current study, we include countries from Eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America along with Western Europe and North America.

Working time is important to study for three reasons. First, the amount of time spent on paid work is one of the key predictors of work-family conflict. This relationship is especially important to examine as women enter the labor force in greater numbers and working time globally is changing for both sexes. Second, unequal amounts of working time for men and women are associated with gender inequality in the labor market and in the home. Therefore, studying working time for individuals and couples is important in order to understand how gender inequality is reduced or reproduced. Finally, many countries have advocated reduced working hours as a tool for lowering unemployment and distributing labor demands more equitably.

6.1. Theoretical Considerations

6.1.1. Work-Family Conflict

Work-family conflict refers to situations in which "the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). Work-family conflict occurs in two directions: work-to-family conflict occurs when work demands make functioning in the family role difficult, and is characterized by family absences, poor family-role performance, family dissatisfaction and distress. Family-to-work conflict occurs when family demands make it difficult to fulfill employee responsibilities, and is associated with absenteeism from work, tardiness, poor job performance, job dissatisfaction and distress (Voydanoff, 2005, p. 707). In the most extreme manifestation, the spillover from work-to-family can lead to divorce, while the spillover from family-to-work can result in dismissal from one's job.

Three types of work demands are known to influence work-family conflict. Time-based demands are the first type, and occur when work time and schedule conflict with the needs of the family. Non-standard work schedules can also disrupt family life. Thus, working schedules that require evening, night or weekend work can be particularly challenging to working families. Rotating and unpredictable schedules can also be disruptive making childcare arrangements difficult to secure (Presser, 2003). Thus, while we focus on the length of the workweek, it is important to keep in mind that this is just one of several different ways that the time constraints of jobs can affect family life.

The second type, strain-based demands, arises when work stressors produce strain and lead to the inability to fulfill the demands of the family. Finally, the third type is behavior-based demands, noted when patterns of behavior in one role conflict with the need for a different type of behavior in another role. For example, a working mother's adoption of the behavior pattern of a "Type A" executive could come into conflict with the family's need for a warm mother figure.

Of these three types of work demands, much support has been found for the time-based model which explains that working hours are related to work-family conflict. Furthermore, time-based demands are easily measured by working hours. Therefore, in this study, we focus on time-based work demands. If such demands are critical predictors of work-family conflict, then it is important to understand how working time varies across countries.

Specifically, working long hours is related to greater work-family conflict for both men and women (Barnett & Gareis, 2002; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004; van der Lippe, Jager, & Kops, 2006; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006). Other research indicates that overtime work, in particular mandatory overtime work, increases work-family conflict (Golden & Wiens-Tuers, 2006). For women who work long hours, experiences of work-family conflict are lessened by the amount of housework husbands do (Barnett & Gareis, 2002). The number of children at home exacerbates work-family conflict (Lundberg, Mardberg, & Frankenhaeuser, 1994; Noor, 2003; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006). Age also has a relationship to work-family conflict,

with role conflict peaking between the ages of 35 and 39 (Lundberg et al., 1994). Socio-economic status, and education level in particular, has not been found to be related to work-family conflict *per se*, although these factors can affect the nature and extent of job demands (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004; Rice, Frone, & McFarlin, 1992).

While long work hours are associated with a greater likelihood of experiencing work-family conflict, limited working time has been linked to better family outcomes. In a study on couples, Hill et al. (2006) found that the division of work hours between the partners is not as important as the combined number of hours worked by the couple. Couples who work no more than a total of 60 hours per week report significantly greater job flexibility, improved work-family fit, enhanced family satisfaction and less work-to-family conflict.

Many studies have shown how work-family conflict is influenced by gender, though results are mixed. Although women are entering the labor force in increasing numbers, gendered conceptions regarding domestic tasks and childcare remain a part of many cultures cross-nationally. As a result, some studies have shown that women, more than men, are at risk for experiencing work-family conflict (Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006). However, not all research indicates that women bear the brunt of work-family conflict. Tang and Cousins (2005) found that men experience more work-family conflict regardless of national context. In Western European countries where mothers work part-time hours and are primary caregivers, men report higher levels of work-family conflict. In Eastern European countries where both men and women work full time jobs but where women are still responsible for childcare, men still report experiencing greater work-family conflict.¹

6.1.2. Gender Inequality

The amount of time spent in the labor market plays a central role in individuals' earnings prospects. Because money is such a central feature of modern societies, working in the labor market increases one's relative power within the family. Thus, working time shapes the extent of gender inequality within the home and in the larger national context. The effect of working time on power is apparent when analyzing the division of housework. A prominent theory on the division of housework, the bargaining model, argues that time spent in the labor market is more valuable than time spent on household chores. Because economic independence is more transferable than skills in the domestic domain, it results in the worker being less dependent on his or her partner (Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2006). Less dependence on one's partner is associated with holding the dominant power in the relationship,

1. This paradox may be resolved when the different types of work-family conflict are distinguished. Thus, it may be that men experience job demands that disrupt family life, while women experience more spillover from family to work (Kmec, 1999).

which in turn affects household decision-making, the distribution of housework and other aspects of family life. Because men are more likely to engage in paid work, they typically hold the larger share of power in their familial relationships.

Gender inequality within the home is important because of its connection to the larger national context. Countries with a more equitable division of time spent on housework are also characterized by high proportions of females in the labor force, higher levels of female representation in the government, and more gender egalitarian attitudes.

The relationship between gender inequality in the home and at the national level cuts both ways. First, the division of housework is influenced by several elements of the national context. For example, Hook (2006) and Fuwa (2004) found that countries with more family-friendly social policies, such as the Scandinavian countries and other welfare states, are also characterized by more widespread gender egalitarian ideals and practices. These studies concluded that the degree of gender equality is positively associated with a more egalitarian division of housework, providing support for the gender ideology/socialization perspective regarding the division of housework. Second, gender inequality within the home may "have enduring consequences that contribute to longer-term inequalities in earnings and reinforce patterns of gender segregation in jobs and occupations" (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004, p. 124). Women's earning opportunities in turn can affect their standard of living during retirement (Meyer, 1990) and in cases of divorce (Smock, Manning, & Gupta, 1999). Therefore, studying how working time is divided along gendered lines is important to understanding how greater gender inequalities are reproduced on multiple levels.

6.1.3. *Unemployment*

Efforts to reduce unemployment have taken several forms across the world (Went, 2000). For example, in the Netherlands in the 1980s, two new measures were taken to tackle rising unemployment rates. The first effort was a reduction in wages, with the intention of increasing profits which would supposedly result in the addition of new jobs. The second technique was the shortening of the workweek, forcing employers to create new jobs in order to accomplish the workload previously done by fewer employees. These attempts were called the "Third Way," and have had mixed results for the Dutch economy. While employment rates increased by almost 50 percent between 1984 and 2001, unemployment rates have remained relatively static.

To explain this paradox, Spithoven (2002) suggests that the part of the answer may lie in the effect of this legislation on individual workers' productivity. Specifically, he argues that "workers were prodded to complete the former volume of work in less time" (Spithoven, 2002, p. 351). In this way, reduced hours legislation, while it often fails to meet its stated goal of increasing employment, can nonetheless have a positive effect on per-worker economic output. Historian Chris Nyland (1989)

finds that this pattern of increased productivity is typical of historical efforts to reduce the length of the workweek.²

6.1.4. *Cross-National Working Time*

Before delving into the analysis at hand, we will outline findings from previous research on working time in various national contexts. The figures we present come from a variety of different sources; while most are from in-depth assessments of individual countries, a few are from large cross-national surveys. Whatever the source, the information is important to place our findings in an established context.

Cross-national data on working time are available from three main sources: Eurostat, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Below we compare our estimates to those obtained from some of these official reports in order to assess the reliability of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) data (Haroarson, 2004).

Some reports (for example, some OECD reports) focus on the total number of hours worked per year in a country. While there is a certain logic to this measure, we feel it is problematic because it combines variation in vacations with the length of the workweek. A single measure for a country also has the disadvantage of combining men and women, and full-time and part-time workers. We prefer more detailed measures that are not fully aggregated to the level of individual countries (see Jacobs & Gerson, 2004, for a more complete discussion of this issue). Other reports (Eurostat and ILO) differentiate between male and female workers. By drawing on micro-data that can be analyzed more fully, we are able to delve further into questions pertaining to working time. In particular, we combine the working time of husbands and wives to give an indication of how busy dual career couples are in different countries. We move the analysis another step forward by examining the prevalence of long workweeks for individuals and couples.

Studies by Jacobs and Gornick (2002) and Jacobs and Gerson (2004) illustrated patterns of working time in 10 Western European and North American countries. Drawing on data from the third or fourth waves of the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), which were executed between 1991 and 1997, Jacobs and Gornick found that American couples worked more than any other country in their sample, while couples in the Netherlands worked the least. The two Scandinavian countries in their sample, Sweden and Finland had the highest proportion of couples where both partners were employed, while Great Britain had a low proportion of married women in the labor force.

Because American working time falls at the high end of the spectrum, we will review Jacobs and Gornick's other findings about the United States. First,

2. Spithoven also notes that other regulations, such as new disability laws which exempted more people from having to work, were introduced at the same time, making it more difficult to assess the unique effects of the shorter hours legislation.

respondents from the United States work long average workweeks; in particular, the working time for women stands out among the other countries in their study. Second, a high proportion of employees work very long hours, with 12 percent of dual earner couples working 100 h or more per week. The United States has the third highest proportion of dual earner couples in the sample, though as discussed, not as high as the Scandinavian countries. Third, wives' working time in the United States is about 20 percent less than their husbands. This figure is greater than the average for the sample; Finnish wives work only 7 percent less than their husbands while Dutch wives work about half as many hours as their husbands. Finally, Jacobs and Gornick discuss the effect of parental status on dual earner couples. While both parents and childless couples work the longest hours in the United States, the impact of parenting differs for mothers and fathers. On average, mothers work about 8.5 fewer hours per weeks than wives without children, while men's working time remains approximately constant. Therefore, the authors conclude that gender equality with respect to working time is greater for women without children in the United States.

Based on the findings of recent research on working time (Bonney, 2005; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004), we predict that working time for British respondents will fall close to the average cross-nationally, despite common perceptions that the British work particularly long hours (Bonney, 2005).

In addition to studying the United States and Western Europe, we will analyze several Eastern European countries, countries in Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Therefore, it is important to understand general employment patterns in some of those areas before analyzing them cross-nationally.

Eastern Europe's history of communism has led to a different configuration of the labor market than found in Western Europe. Tang and Cousins (2005) reported that both men and women work in high proportions in the Eastern European countries they studied, the Czech Republic, Romania and Hungary. Despite women's long history in the work force, women are still responsible for childcare, placing on them a double burden.

In their study of the Israeli labor force, Cohen and Stier (2006) found an increase in the number of "involuntary part time jobs." When part time jobs are involuntary, it is because the labor market supports part time jobs, forcing workers, regardless of preference for full time jobs, to work part time. Women are more likely than men to be forced into jobs with fewer hours than they prefer. Therefore, we expect to see high proportions of Israeli women working fewer hours per week than in other countries.

In response to the economic crisis and recession in Asia, the labor force participation rate in the Philippines underwent a change. While the unemployment rate for men increased, women entered the labor force in increasing numbers and began to work longer workweeks (Lim, 2000). However, the effect of increased female labor force participation on gender equality is ambiguous, and some argue that the changes did not necessarily lead to greater gender equality for Filipino women, but may actually have decreased their economic status and welfare.

6.2. Data and Methods

This analysis draws on data obtained from the 2002 ISSP: Family and Changing Gender Roles III. The ISSP is a collection of comparable national surveys from countries around the world compiled into one dataset, allowing for cross-national comparisons. The 2002 ISSP asks a broad range of questions about the respondent and the respondent's partner, including questions that consider attitudes toward women in the labor market, the division of housework between partners, weekly hours in the labor market, the degree of control the respondent exercises in making family decisions, income, family composition and other demographic information. The original dataset includes over 45,000 individuals, aged 15–96, from 34 countries.

Because working time is the central focus in this study, we limited the analysis to 28 countries for which there is information regarding the working time for the respondent and his/her partner. Furthermore, the sample was limited to include only the prime working-age population, respondents between the ages of 18 and 64. The countries included in the final analysis are listed in appendix Table 6.A.1, which also provides information on the survey data and the sample size. In most of the countries, the surveys were conducted in 2002 and 2003, with Bulgaria (2001) fielding their survey first and Austria (2003–2004) last in our group.

6.2.1. Measures

The dependent variable in this study is hours of paid work per week. Information on working hours was provided by one respondent per household, who answered questions about both her and her partner's working hours. For the majority of the analysis, we examine only respondents and/or their partners who engaged in at least 1 h of paid labor per week. We examine the workweek from the point of view of individuals as well as the joint hours of paid work of couples. We also report findings on the proportion of individuals in each country who put in especially long workweeks, namely those working 50 or more hours per week.

For the analysis at the level of the couple, we examine respondents who say they are either married (and living as married) or cohabiting (living as married without being officially married). These measures were combined into one variable that indicates whether a respondent has a partner for four reasons. First, a few countries posed the question in such a way that the respondent is asked whether they are "married or living as married," as opposed to married *and* living as married, making it difficult to distinguish between marriage and cohabitation. Second, because of the complications surrounding legal marital status in different parts of the world, the meaning of a married individual would vary cross-nationally. Third, we are interested in the joint working time of couples, regardless of the legality of their union. Finally, we calculated average working hours separately for married and cohabiting respondents where possible, and the results were not significantly different.

At the level of couple, we combine both the respondent's and his partner's work hours if at least one of them works a minimum of 1 h per week. We then control for whether both the respondent and partner work, measured by a dummy variable for dual earner status, and whether the couple are parents of children under the age of 17. In addition, we created a categorical variables based on the combined working hours of dual earner couples that indicates whether they work short (less than 80 joint hours per week), moderate (80–99 h) or long (100 h or more) workweeks.

6.3. Results

6.3.1. Individual Level Analysis

As the issue of working time is most pressing in the context of dual earner couples, we begin by describing patterns of women's labor force participation. Table 6.1 shows the percentage of women and men who are in the labor force in each of the sample countries. The countries are sorted by the percent of women in the labor force.

Across all of the countries in our sample, the average labor force participation rate for women is 66 percent. However, the proportion of respondents currently in the labor force varies greatly and differs by gender. Women's labor force participation varies from about 50 percent in Brazil, Chile and Hungary to 80 percent in New Zealand and Sweden. To the extent that family life is influenced by women's employment patterns, these data suggest that the pace of family life varies markedly across our sample of countries.

Two quite different groups of countries share the lead in women's labor force participation. The Nordic countries, including Sweden, Denmark and Finland, have long encouraged women's participation in the economy; in each of these countries, women participate in the labor force at relatively high rates. However, the same pattern can be observed in several countries that emphasize an unconstrained labor market. In particular, Great Britain, the United States and New Zealand, have high rates of women's labor force participation based on social arrangements that differ noticeably from the Nordic pattern.

We were somewhat surprised to see low rates of women's labor force participation in some Eastern European countries such as Hungary, given the historically high rates of women's employment in socialist economies. This pattern may reflect the secondary position women have taken in the transition from socialist to market economies (e.g. Plomien, 2006; Pollert, 2003).

The data in Table 6.1 remind us that not all men in their prime working years are employed. Men's labor force participation rate averages 83 percent, and exceeds 70 percent in all of the countries in the sample. Men's labor force participation rate exceeds that for women in all of the countries in our sample. There is a weak positive association between men's and women's labor force participation ($r = .35$). As a result, in some countries, such as the Nordic countries, men's and women's labor force

Table 6.1: Proportion of sample with characteristics by country.

	Labor force participation rate						Percent with partners
	Females	Males	Single females	Partnered females	Single males	Partnered males	
Sweden	80.1	84.9	72.6	83.7	73.5	89.7	74.1
New Zealand	78.5	93.8	87.7	75.5	86.8	95.6	76.5
Denmark	76.5	80.9	63.6	81.3	62.7	87.4	72.8
Great Britain	74.0	83.9	74.3	73.8	80.0	86.1	65.6
USA	72.4	87.4	75.5	70.1	82.6	91.3	56.7
Finland	71.5	81.0	70.6	71.8	68.6	84.9	71.9
Switzerland	71.1	88.9	76.4	68.6	81.0	92.6	69.4
France	70.2	76.4	68.7	71.1	76.6	76.4	77.2
Cyprus	69.9	88.3	64.3	70.6	68.6	98.9	67.5
Latvia	68.7	80.9	63.6	72.4	60.7	90.8	62.2
Norway	67.8	82.7	57.1	71.1	64.5	88.3	76.5
Israel	67.7	80.8	57.1	72.5	67.7	87.9	73.1
Portugal	67.7	85.4	64.8	69.0	82.1	87.5	63.6
Russia	67.6	79.9	60.8	67.2	70.3	84.9	61.0
Bulgaria	67.5	76.7	52.3	73.0	66.7	80.1	74.5
Belgium	67.3	83.3	57.2	70.6	69.3	88.9	72.9
Poland	67.3	77.4	59.9	70.7	68.7	82.8	65.1
The Netherlands	66.3	83.8	72.7	63.4	80.6	85.3	68.8
Taiwan	62.7	89.7	70.1	58.9	79.2	96.1	64.2
Mexico	61.5	88.2	69.3	58.6	84.3	92.1	68.9
Philippines	60.9	85.9	59.8	61.0	69.9	93.0	73.9
Austria	59.7	79.8	60.6	59.1	76.3	81.9	62.7
Spain	59.2	84.3	67.7	54.6	77.9	89.0	61.1
Germany	56.5	79.3	62.1	55.4	69.1	82.9	78.0
Japan	51.9	88.0	60.8	49.2	72.7	94.6	73.5
Hungary	50.4	71.8	74.6	51.8	57.4	78.7	66.8
Chile	48.4	89.8	58.4	42.0	79.8	95.6	62.1
Brazil	45.4	69.9	54.1	39.5	64.4	73.4	63.1
Average	65.3	83.0	65.6	65.2	72.9	87.7	68.7

participation rates are quite similar. In other countries, such as Japan, Chile, Japan, Taiwan and Mexico, women's labor force participation trails far behind that of men.

The last column in Table 6.1 shows the proportion of respondents with a partner by country. The average proportion of respondents with a partner across all countries is 69 percent, with most countries falling into the 60–80 percent range. The United States stands out as having a particularly low percentage of the adult

population with partners, owing to a combination of late marriage and a high divorce rate.

We now turn to the length of the workweek. Table 6.2 shows the average hours worked per week by sex and country. Across all countries, the average workweek for men is approximately 45 hours per week. There is nonetheless variation around this average, with country level means ranging from just over 37 hours per week in the Netherlands to over 52 hours per week in Chile. In 19 out of the 28 countries, the average workweek for men is tightly clustered around the average, falling within a 5-hour range between 41 and 46 hours per week.

Table 6.2: Working hours by country and sex.

	Average work hours per week		Percent working 50 hours +	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Philippines	42.6	44.3	29.7	31.2
Taiwan	46.2	49.7	26.0	37.0
Chile	42.8	51.8	25.8	40.7
Mexico	40.4	47.6	24.0	35.8
Poland	42.7	49.0	21.9	39.7
Hungary	42.4	49.5	21.6	49.8
USA	38.9	45.3	18.7	36.1
Bulgaria	41.8	45.1	16.5	24.2
Brazil	39.2	45.8	16.3	29.6
Latvia	40.4	45.2	14.0	30.3
Japan	34.3	49.8	11.3	51.5
Great Britain	33.7	45.5	10.9	33.2
Russia	38.6	43.9	10.9	23.3
Portugal	38.7	45.1	10.1	24.5
Austria	35.3	43.5	10.0	24.1
Germany	36.3	45.6	9.5	30.6
New Zealand	32.1	44.1	8.6	36.0
Spain	35.5	43.0	7.4	23.5
Belgium	32.5	43.3	7.3	22.6
Switzerland	32.0	44.3	7.3	24.8
Israel	32.0	45.2	7.2	41.2
France	34.6	42.0	5.6	19.2
Norway	33.9	42.8	5.4	24.0
Sweden	36.0	40.2	4.3	12.9
Denmark	35.8	41.6	4.1	18.6
Finland	35.2	39.7	1.7	13.8
Cyprus	38.6	42.2	1.3	11.9
The Netherlands	25.2	37.3	0.8	8.7
Average	37.1	44.7	12.1	28.5

Most of the countries at the high end of the spectrum are relatively poor. For example, men in Chile, Taiwan and Mexico work particularly long workweeks compared to most other countries in the sample. Several Eastern European countries also have relatively long workweeks. Poland and Hungary exemplify this pattern in our sample of countries. Of the richest countries, Japan, Great Britain and the United States are at the high end of the spectrum in terms of the length of men's workweek. For all of the extensive attention paid to the 35-hour workweek in France, it should be noted that men in France typically work just under 42 hours per week, much in line with their counterparts in other countries.

The average workweek for women is shorter than for men in each of the countries in our sample. Women work seven fewer hours for pay on average than do men. In addition, there is more variability across countries in the length of women's workweek. For women, there are eight countries where the average workweek exceeded 40 hours. These included several developing countries: Taiwan, Chile, Mexico and the Philippines. Women also tend to put in long hours in Eastern Europe: Hungary, Poland, Latvia and Bulgaria fit this pattern.

At the other end of the spectrum, there were 7 countries where women work less than 35 hours per week: Japan, Great Britain, Israel, Switzerland, New Zealand, Belgium, Norway, France and the Netherlands. The Netherlands has the shortest workweek for women; it is the only country in our sample where women average less than 30 hours per week on the job.

In general, countries with long workweeks for men also tend to have long workweeks for women. Overall, the correlation between the length of the workweek for men and women is .65. However, there are notable exceptions to this pattern which result in marked cases of gender specialization.

Across the countries in our analysis, the gender gap in the length of the workweek varies markedly. Countries where the gender gap in the length of the workweek is particularly large — 10 hours or more — include Japan, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland. Great Britain just misses this cutoff, with British men working almost 10 hours per week more than women. Our findings suggest that a variety of policies and cultures can generate a gendered outcome in the length of the workweek.

Other countries in this sample have a relatively small gender gap in the length of the workweek — less than 5 hours. In a number of instances, these are relatively poor countries where both women and men are expected to contribute to the family income. These countries include Taiwan, the Philippines and Cyprus, as well as several Eastern European countries. Latvia and Bulgaria represent an Eastern European pattern where both employed men and women tend to work in full time jobs. Poland, Hungary and Russia do not quite meet the 5-hour-per-week gap but are not far from it. In the more affluent countries, it is the Nordic model where the gender gap in the length of the workweek is smaller, as exemplified by Sweden and Finland.

The ISSP data on the length of the workweek are reasonably close to the statistics provided by the ILO 2007. We examined the correlation of the average workweeks for the 20 countries included in both data sources (data not shown; results available

from the authors). The association was strong for both women ($r = .84$) and men ($r = .78$). For men, the workweek is generally somewhat longer in the ISSP data: the ISSP workweek for men is more than 4 hours longer than that reported in the ILO data for nine countries: Austria, Spain, Belgium, Great Britain, Norway, Portugal, Poland, New Zealand and Chile. For women, only Poland and Portugal have a discrepancy of more than 4 hours per week (again, the ISSP workweek is longer).

Another way to look at working patterns for individuals is to examine the proportion working long hours, measured by the proportion working 50 hours or more per week (also shown in Table 6.2). This indicator begins to zero in on the issue of over-worked individuals. In other words, country averages reflect the typical workweek but also include those who may work part-time. Focusing on those individuals who work 50 hours per week or more gives us a better sense of the prevalence of long workweeks.

While Chile has the longest average workweek for men, Japan and Hungary possess the largest share of men working long hours, approximately 50 percent of employed men. Chilean men still have a large proportion working very long hours, at 41 percent of working men. The Netherlands has the smallest proportion working 50 hours or more per week for both men and women, at just 9 and 1 percent, respectively.

In general, women are less likely to work more than 50 hours for pay than are their male counterparts (of course, adding unpaid labor devoted to housework and child care would change this conclusion). The Philippines stands out as having the highest fraction of women working 50 hours or more per week, followed by Taiwan, Chile, Mexico, Poland and Hungary. In each of these six countries, more than one in five women puts in more than 50 hours per week on the job. Of the most affluent countries, the United States just trails this group at 19 percent. In Great Britain, 11 percent of women work more than 50 hours per week for pay, which is about average for this sample of countries.

6.3.2. *Couple Level Analysis*

We have suggested that the issue of busy lives can best be understood in the context of how busy families are. Thus, a 45-hour workweek for a husband of a stay-at-home wife has a very different meaning than if the wife is herself employed full time. Therefore, our analysis now turns to the workweeks of couples.

These results are presented in Table 6.3. The first important point is that the percentage of dual earner couples varies by country, ranging from just one-quarter to almost the entire sample. In the majority of couples, both partners are typically working for pay. The average across the entire sample is 58 percent, and in 21 of the 28 countries, the majority of couples are dual earners.

On average, dual earner couples put in about 82 joint hours per week in paid employment, which is roughly the equivalent of two full time jobs. However, the meaning of being in a dual earner couple varies widely across countries. In other

Table 6.3: Dual earner couples.

	Percent of dual earner couples	Average hours per week		Percent of dual earner couples that work		
		All couples	Dual earner couples	Less than 80 hours	80-99 hours	100 or more hours
Norway	98.9	75.5	75.9	62.5	32.0	5.5
Denmark	98.0	76.5	77.4	68.4	26.0	5.6
Finland	82.3	70.0	76.8	61.6	33.1	5.3
Sweden	80.2	67.9	76.6	47.9	48.1	4.0
New Zealand	70.1	63.6	77.2	52.0	36.5	11.5
Switzerland	68.0	64.0	74.3	57.5	35.1	7.5
Germany	61.7	64.6	81.1	39.6	47.4	13.1
Great Britain	61.7	58.5	77.5	59.0	31.3	9.7
Portugal	61.2	67.2	85.4	28.8	53.7	17.5
Cyprus	60.7	66.8	81.5	42.7	54.3	3.0
Belgium	60.6	56.7	76.3	65.9	24.8	9.2
Latvia	60.0	65.6	86.2	12.5	66.3	21.2
The Netherlands	58.0	48.1	63.4	87.9	10.9	1.2
Poland	56.8	73.2	92.6	17.5	49.3	33.2
Russia	55.8	61.2	83.0	29.8	55.3	14.9
Japan	55.3	66.7	85.1	36.3	42.4	21.3
Austria	54.5	59.5	78.3	57.4	30.3	12.3
Taiwan	53.9	72.6	94.9	15.8	51.3	32.9
France	52.0	56.6	75.9	67.1	27.1	5.7
Israel	51.5	59.4	80.8	42.8	40.0	17.2
USA	50.8	59.6	82.7	36.1	44.6	19.3
Spain	46.0	58.1	79.0	42.0	49.0	9.0
Hungary	44.2	55.6	92.3	11.4	54.2	34.3
Bulgaria	38.4	46.3	84.5	14.6	69.5	16.0
Philippines	36.5	58.3	86.5	36.8	35.8	27.4
Chile	34.5	60.6	91.2	27.1	45.7	27.1
Mexico	34.4	60.4	87.4	34.7	39.6	25.7
Brazil	25.6	48.8	85.7	29.9	50.2	19.9
Average	57.6	62.2	81.8	42.3	42.3	15.4

words, the extent of the joint workweek varies markedly. In Taiwan, Chile, Poland and Hungary, husbands and wives jointly put in more than 90 hours per week on the job. Thus, the busiest couples are not in the richest countries in our sample but rather are in several developing economies in the Eastern European and Asian countries.

The Netherlands stands out as having dual earner couples with the most free time outside of the demands of the workplace. The average dual earner couple in the Netherlands puts in just 63 hours per week on the job, a full 30 hours less per week than in Taiwan. Dual earner couples in the United States work about 83 hours per week and about 77 hours per week in Great Britain.

Another way to understand how busy family life has become is to examine the percentage of couples who work more than 100 hours per week (also in Table 6.3). In Great Britain, about 10 percent of couples put in 100 hours per week or more on the job. The rate in the United States is nearly double that, at 19 percent. Three countries in our sample find one third of couples working 100 or more hours per week (Poland, Hungary and Taiwan). At the other end of the spectrum, 10 countries, all European, have fewer than 10 percent of couples who work 100 hours per week. These countries include Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, France, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Cyprus and The Netherlands.

Yet another way to understand the gender gap in working time is to focus on busy parents. It is one thing to have a husband and wife putting in 100 hours per week on the job; it is another matter altogether if they also have children at home. In our sample, parents averaged 7 fewer hours per week on the job than did non-parents. Furthermore, in 22 of the 26 countries we examined, parents worked fewer hours than non-parents.³ Most of the difference between the working hours of parents and non-parents can be attributed to the reduced working time of mothers (see Table 6.4). In 11 of the 26 countries with available data, mothers put in significantly fewer hours per week than did women without children. In none of the cases where mothers work more than other married women were the differences statistically significant. The difference between the working times of fathers and non-fathers was less clear, and only statistically significant in only three countries, two where fathers worked more and one, Cyprus, where fathers worked less.

We examined whether these "parenting" effects — generally fewer hours on the job for mothers and little difference for fathers — continue to hold true after other relevant factors are taken into account. For example, married mothers may differ from other married women in various ways, including differences in age and education. Can socio-demographic differences between mothers and other married women account for the "parenting effects" we have observed?

To answer this question, we conducted multivariate regression analyses which adjusted the parenting gaps presented in Table 6.4 for differences in education and age. The results indicate that the parenting effects are generally the result of parenting *per se* and are not due to differences in the attributes of mothers compared with other married women. Recall that in 11 of the 26 countries, married mothers put in fewer hours on the job than did other married women. After controlling for age

3. The Bulgarian and New Zealand data could not be analyzed in this section due to missing information on children. In four of the countries, parents worked only slightly more than non-parents: Norway (1.53 hours), Portugal (1.20), Switzerland (1.16) and Taiwan (.27).

Table 6.4: Working hours for dual earner couples by parental status.

	Couples			Females			Males		
	No kids	Kids	Difference	No kids	Kids	Difference	No kids	Kids	Difference
Austria	55.82	61.30	5.48	37.2	31.3	5.9	43.9	44.7	-0.8
Belgium	48.30	67.41	19.11	33.9	30.7	3.2	43.5	43.9	-0.4
Brazil	47.62	49.05	1.42	42.1	35.2	7.0	42.5	47.5	-5.0
Chile	56.23	63.18	6.96	42.5	39.2	3.3	52.4	52.2	0.2
Cyprus	56.52	74.05	17.54	38.2	39.0	-0.9	46.4	41.8	4.5
Denmark	76.00	77.03	1.03	37.1	35.4	1.7	41.7	42.0	-0.3
Finland	69.11	71.32	2.21	35.7	36.0	-0.2	39.7	40.9	-1.2
France	46.38	61.03	14.65	35.5	32.7	2.8	41.7	42.7	-1.1
Germany	63.43	64.75	1.32	37.5	33.2	4.3	46.1	46.8	-0.7
Great Britain	57.51	61.16	3.65	35.7	28.5	7.2	46.3	47.7	-1.4
Hungary	50.16	62.96	12.80	41.4	43.1	-1.7	49.1	50.0	-0.9
Israel	53.57	62.04	8.47	35.2	32.9	2.3	45.4	46.6	-1.2
Japan	61.68	70.99	9.31	34.4	30.3	4.2	50.1	50.9	-0.7
Latvia	56.90	71.43	14.53	40.5	39.1	1.4	43.7	48.4	-4.7
Mexico	53.84	62.85	9.01	36.9	38.9	-2.0	45.5	51.1	-5.7
The Netherlands	43.73	53.08	9.35	28.5	21.8	6.7	39.0	40.2	-1.2
Norway	76.36	74.83	-1.53	34.3	33.2	1.1	44.0	43.3	0.7
Philippines	49.50	59.69	10.20	45.8	41.6	4.2	43.7	43.1	0.6
Poland	68.84	75.73	6.89	44.6	42.6	2.1	49.5	51.2	-1.7
Portugal	68.64	67.44	-1.20	38.6	39.3	-0.7	43.8	48.2	-4.4
Russia	49.57	66.70	17.12	40.1	38.7	1.4	44.0	44.8	-0.8
Spain	56.24	60.28	4.04	36.7	33.7	3.0	41.7	44.3	-2.7
Sweden	66.07	70.79	4.72	37.1	34.8	2.4	41.2	40.6	0.6
Switzerland	64.38	63.22	-1.16	32.7	28.6	4.1	45.7	43.3	2.4
Taiwan	72.76	72.49	-0.27	47.5	44.7	2.8	50.9	48.9	2.0
USA	58.80	60.41	1.61	38.6	32.5	6.1	48.9	50.2	-1.3
Average	58.8	65.6	6.8	38.0	35.3	2.8	45.0	46.0	-1.0

and education, this difference remained statistically significant in eight of the countries.

Among men, we found that married fathers generally did not work a longer workweek than did married men without children after age and education were taken into account. While the average workweek for fathers was longer in the majority of cases, the difference was only statistically significant for Cyprus, where fathers actually work less than non-fathers.

These results suggest that the arrival of children reduces the time parents devote to earning money just at the time when families are most in need of additional financial resources. Furthermore, children reinforce gender disparities within the family, with wives' paid working time reduced in the majority of countries while their husbands maintain their time on the job.

Our final analysis examines the difference between the amount of time worked by husbands and wives within each couple in the sample. Table 6.5 shows the weekly hours worked by wives and husbands in dual earner couples and the difference between the amount of time each contributes. In column one, we see a large variation in the length of wives' workweeks, which ranges from 25 to 46 hours per week. Across all countries, wives work an average of 37 hours per week in dual earner couples. Husbands, however, are less varied in the amount of time they work each week, which ranges from 39 to 52 hours per week and averages 45 hours per week across all countries. In the majority of countries, the disparity between the amount of time wives and husbands work is less than 10 hours per week, and on average, wives work 8.5 hours less per week than their husbands. Japan stands out as having the largest gap between husbands' and wives' working time, at 18 hours per week. At the other end of the spectrum, Taiwanese and Filipino wives work almost as much as their husbands, approximately 3 hours less per week.

6.4. Discussion

Our findings modify the conclusions of Jacobs and Gerson (2004) and Jacobs and Gornick (2002). In their analysis of 10 Western European and North American countries, the working time in the United States stood out, both in terms of long average working hours and the proportion of couples working very long hours. However, with the addition of Eastern European, Asian, Middle Eastern and Latin American countries, workers in the United States no longer lead the pack. Non-Western countries have employees who generally work longer hours than employees in Western countries, and are particularly highly concentrated at the high end of the spectrum.

The first pattern worth noting is regarding the proportion of the sample currently employed. Not surprisingly, the rates differ for men and women, but most Western countries have higher rates of employment for both sexes than other geographic areas. This finding contradicts what we expected to find about the formerly communist nations in Eastern Europe. Under communism, it was common for

Table 6.5: Comparison of wives' and husbands' working hours.

	Wife's hours	Husband's hours	Difference
Japan	32.7	51.7	18.4
Switzerland	30.2	44.7	14.6
The Netherlands	24.5	39.0	14.3
New Zealand	31.4	45.1	14.0
Great Britain	31.6	45.8	14.0
Israel	32.8	47.2	13.2
Belgium	32.4	44.3	11.6
Austria	34.0	44.2	10.9
Germany	35.4	45.3	10.9
Chile	40.8	51.7	10.3
USA	37.1	46.2	10.1
Mexico	38.9	49.2	9.8
Norway	33.6	42.4	8.8
Spain	35.8	43.9	7.3
France	34.2	42.1	7.3
Latvia	39.6	46.3	7.1
Hungary	43.0	50.4	7.0
Brazil	39.8	47.6	6.6
Poland	43.6	49.8	6.3
Denmark	35.7	41.7	6.0
Sweden	35.6	40.9	5.4
Russia	39.4	44.2	4.8
Finland	36.0	40.4	4.2
Cyprus	38.8	43.0	3.8
Portugal	40.8	43.9	3.5
Bulgaria	40.9	44.9	3.2
Taiwan	46.2	49.0	2.9
Philippines	41.7	45.5	2.4
Average	36.7	45.4	8.5

women to participate in the labor market (e.g. Tang & Cousins, 2005). However, in comparison to the rest of the sample countries, this region no longer stands out. In all of the five Eastern European countries in the sample, both men and women are employed at lower than average rates.

Jacobs and Gerson (2004) found that dual earner couples in the United States worked the most hours per week than the other countries in their sample. When we broadened the sample to include more countries, we find a somewhat different picture — the workweek in the United States for dual earner couples is just over the average across all of the countries. However, all except for one of the countries that

have longer workweeks than the United States were located in Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

We see the same pattern when we observe the proportion of dual earner couples working very long hours. While Jacobs and Gornick (2002) found that America had the highest proportion of dual earner couples working long hours in comparison to Western European and North American countries, this is no longer the case when we include a more diverse sample of countries. Although the United States falls behind nine other countries in terms of proportion of dual earner couples working very long hours, it still leads in comparison to Western European nations. While the United States changes its position relative to the other countries in the sample, the Netherlands, which had the shortest working time in studies by Jacobs and Gornick (2002) and Jacobs and Gerson (2004), also has the shortest workweek with respect to the countries in the 2002 ISSP sample.

Based on our results regarding the working time of dual earner couples, we assert that the meaning of being a partner in a "dual earner couple" varies cross-nationally. First of all, dual earner couples are more commonly found in some countries than others. The majority of the most developed countries have high proportions of dual earner couples while most of the Eastern European, Asian and Latin American countries in the sample have lower proportions of dual earner couples. For example, almost all of the couples from the Scandinavian countries in the sample are dual earner couples, while only one-quarter of Brazilian couples are composed of two workers.

Second, working time for dual earner couples also varies. In some countries, a majority of dual earner couples consist of partners who both work full time. Other countries have different arrangements: one partner may work full time while the other works part time, or both partners may work part time jobs. While dual earners in Taiwan, Poland, Hungary and Chile all work long hours, suggesting that both partners work long hours, the dual earner couples in the Netherlands work much shorter workweeks, indicating a greater proportion of part time jobs.

On the whole, the patterns of labor force participation and working time in Great Britain are about average for men, but the story is a bit more complex for British women. While British women's labor force participation rates are well above average, they tend to work fewer hours per week than other women. Furthermore, the difference between the working time of British mothers and other British women is the greatest in the sample, with British mothers working more than 9 hours less than non-mothers when controlling for age and education. Owing to women's lower than average working time, dual earner couples in Great Britain typically work fewer than 80 joint hours per week, and are less likely to work very long hours than couples in other countries in the sample. Finally, of these dual earner couples, British wives work significantly less than their husbands work each week.

Therefore, while Jacobs and Gerson (2004) found that the American dual earner couples worked the longest combined workweeks of any other country in their sample, the current analysis modifies their findings. We conclude that the United States' combined work hours are long relative to those in Western Europe but are not very long relative to less affluent countries in other parts of the world.

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Appendix:

Table 6.A.1: Survey Information by Country.

	Year(s) of survey	Unweighted sample size	
		Female	Male
Austria	2003-2004	1006	651
Belgium	2002	545	521
Brazil	2003	915	889
Bulgaria	2001	435	331
Chile	2002	713	560
Cyprus	2002	465	436
Denmark	2002-2003	622	497
Finland	2002-2003	628	510
France	2002	1136	504
Germany	2002	560	555
Great Britain	2002	872	664
Hungary	2002	438	348
Israel	2002	582	448
Japan	2002	447	395
Latvia	2003	496	372
Mexico	2003	776	516
Netherlands	2002-2003	546	501
New Zealand	2002	480	328
Norway	2002	683	598
Philippines	2002	566	562
Poland	2002	562	439
Portugal	2003	492	353
Russia	2002	859	598
Spain	2003	979	980
Sweden	2002	474	419
Switzerland	2002-2003	392	377
Taiwan	2002	888	837
USA	2002	568	419
Average		647	522

THE LONG WORK HOURS CULTURE: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND CHOICES

EDITED BY

RONALD J. BURKE

*Schulich School of Business,
York University,
Toronto, Canada*

CARY L. COOPER

*Lancaster University Management School,
Lancaster University,
Lancaster, UK*



United Kingdom • North America • Japan
India • Malaysia • China

Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2008

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-84855-038-4

Printed and bound by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall



Awarded in recognition of Emerald's production department's adherence to quality systems and processes when preparing scholarly journals for print



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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List of Contributors

<i>Morris Altman</i>	Department of Economics, University of Saskatchewan, Canada
<i>Arnold B. Bakker</i>	Department of Work and Organizational Psychology, Erasmus University, The Netherlands
<i>Carmen Binnewies</i>	Department of Psychology, University of Konstanz, Germany
<i>Ronald J. Burke</i>	Schulich School of Business, York University, Canada
<i>Rebecca Burwell</i>	Lecturer, Conestoga College, Canada
<i>Charles P. Chen</i>	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Canada
<i>Lisa Fiksenbaum</i>	Department of Psychology, York University, Canada
<i>Lonnie Golden</i>	Department of Economics and Labor Studies, Pennsylvania State University, PA, USA
<i>Francis Green</i>	Department of Economics, University of Kent, UK
<i>Constance Noonan Hadley</i>	John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, MA, USA
<i>Anne Laure Humbert</i>	Middlesex University Business School, Middlesex, UK
<i>Jerry A. Jacobs</i>	Department of Sociology, University of Pennsylvania, PA, USA
<i>Suzan Lewis</i>	Middlesex University Business School, Middlesex, UK