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**HOURS OF PAID WORK IN DUAL EARNER COUPLES:  
THE U.S. IN CROSS-NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

In this paper we examine the hours of paid work of husbands and wives in ten industrialized countries, using data from the Luxembourg Income Study. We present results on the average hours of paid work put in jointly by couples, on the proportion working very long weekly hours, and on gender equality in working time within families. The United States ranks at or near the top on most indicators of working time for couples, because of 1) a high proportion of dual-earner couples; 2) long average work weeks, especially among women; and 3) a high proportion of individuals who work very long hours. In terms of gender equality, the U.S. ranks above average in paid working time among dual-earner couples with no children, but fares less well among working parents. Finally, we discuss policies and institutions that may help explain the distinctive U.S. results -- namely the long hours and moderate levels of gender equality -- including the regulation of maximum hours, the demand for part-time work, and the public provision of child care.

## **I. Introduction and Background.**

### *Introduction.*

While issues related to working time have been actively debated since the earliest days of the industrial revolution (Roediger and Foner, 1989), the last twenty years have brought renewed interest in work hours, both in the United States and abroad.<sup>1</sup> Labor unions, policy-makers, and scholars across several disciplines have focused on paid working time from at least three perspectives. First, reducing working hours is often advocated as a tool for lowering unemployment and distributing labor demand more equitably. This perspective has been common in Europe in recent years, where many countries have been plagued by persistently high unemployment since the late 1970s.

Second, as women's labor force participation has steadily increased across the industrialized countries -- especially among mothers of young children -- many families now grapple with severe time pressures, as both women and men struggle to balance time on the job with responsibilities at home. The time demands of employment often affect the quality of life of all family members, and raise growing concerns about the well-being of children and other dependent family members in need of care (Schor, 1991; Hochschild, 1997; Jacobs and Gerson, 1998a). Long hours spent in paid work may also crowd out opportunities for community involvement and reduce civic engagement (Putnam, 2000).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, when we use the word "work" without modification, we refer to paid market work. Although we certainly recognize that much unpaid activity is also "work", maintaining the distinction between paid work and unpaid work throughout the paper seemed unnecessarily cumbersome.

<sup>2</sup> We refer here to one of Putnam's specific findings, namely that the increase in working time among women has contributed to a decline in volunteer activity. The debate about Putnam's

Third, feminists continue to wrestle with concerns about gender inequality in the labor market. Recent research indicates that despite the long-term increase in women's labor market attachment, substantial gender differentials persist in both participation rates and hours; gender gaps in time spent working for pay are especially sharp among parents (Gornick, 1999). Undoubtedly, these gaps are rooted in women's disproportionate responsibilities for caregiving and other work in the home. Gaps in women's and men's time spent in market work have enduring consequences as they contribute to inequalities in cash and non-cash earnings (Blau, Ferber, and Winker, 1998; Gornick and Jacobs, 1996; Rubery, Smith, and Fagan, 1998). Gendered time disparities also reinforce entrenched patterns of gender segregation in jobs and occupations (Reskin and Padavic, 1994). For women in couples, marked intra-family differentials in hours spent working for pay raise a host of concerns about power imbalances in the family, and about wives' economic vulnerability should they lose access to their husbands' earnings (Bianchi, Caspar, and Peltola, 1996; Hobson, 1990).

In this paper, we analyze family working time in the middle 1990s in ten industrialized countries: the U.S., Canada, and eight diverse European countries. This study is distinctive in several ways. First, while several cross-national studies (OECD, 1998; Rubery Smith and Fagan, 1998) have documented that U.S. workers spend long hours in the labor market -- on both an annual and weekly basis -- few studies have focused on the joint work hours of dual-earner couples, as we do in this study. Second, we focus on cross-national variation in the dispersion of

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thesis hinges on whether civic participation has declined or instead has changed in form. For informative discussions, see Skocpol (1999) and Ladd (1999).

individuals' and couples' hours, in addition to the average length of the work week. Finally, we integrate concerns about gender equality into our analyses of working time.

In the remainder of this section, we assess cross-national variation in working time, and analyze recent trends both in hours worked and in ongoing efforts to shorten working time through combinations of collective bargaining and legislation. In Section II, we lay out our analytical approach and identify a series of specific research questions that we will pursue. In this section, we underscore the value of focusing on couples as the core unit of analysis, rather than individuals, and we stress the value of comparing weekly rather than annual hours when comparing working time across countries. In Section III, we describe the Luxembourg Income Study data and in Section IV, we present our empirical results. In Section V, we identify key policy and institutional factors that influence working time, and consider policy factors that explain at least some of the variation in couples' working time that we report. In Section VI, we summarize our findings and offer some directions for future research.

### *Cross-National Variation in Working Time.*

Cross-national comparisons of working time are typically based on annual hours of paid work. This approach multiplies hours worked per week by weeks worked per year to get a measure of the yearly economic contributions of individuals. This is not an ideal indicator, as we discuss in greater detail below, but it is readily available for a wide range of countries, and consequently is the starting point for most cross-national comparisons of working time. When measured in this manner, workers in the U.S. stands out as putting in many more hours than do their European counterparts.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Table 1 reports a variety of indicators of annual hours. Countries are ranked with respect to the first column, which presents an indicator of annual hours that is published regularly by the OECD. These data indicate that workers in the U.S. report the longest hours per annum of any of the countries included in the analysis.<sup>3</sup> As reported in the first column, the average U.S. worker represented works 1976 hours per year, roughly the equivalent of a 40 hour week for 50 weeks per year. The average German worker, in contrast, works 1556 hours per year, or the equivalent of 35 hours per week for less than 45 weeks. The lowest annual hours (1368) are found in the Netherlands, where the average worker contributes the equivalent of 35 hours per week for 39 weeks of the year. One factor that drives up the U.S. annual hours, relative to the other countries, is that most European workers are entitled to many more vacation days than are U.S. workers.

This indicator makes the schedule of the European worker seem unimaginably leisurely from the point of view of harried workers in the U.S., who often put in very long work weeks. However, in actuality, the discrepancy between the U.S. and Europe is not nearly as great as these figures seem to indicate. Among the limitations of the data in this first column is that they represent an average of employed individuals, including women as well as men and those on part-time as well as full-time schedules. For example, there are probably few Dutch workers who actually work 35 hours per week, for 39 weeks. Annual hours in the Netherlands include the

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<sup>3</sup> The most recent OECD data indicate that U.S. workers' hours surpass those of even the notoriously hard-working Japanese.

hours of some full-time workers who contribute 1800 hours and those of part-time workers (mostly women) who may work 1100 or 1200 hours.

The second column of Table 1 provides a useful supplement by restricting the scope of the analysis to full-time workers. Here the cross-national variation becomes much more restricted, with the typical full-time European worker putting in about 1700-1800 hours per year (1800 hours equals 40 hours per week for 45 weeks). The U.K. leads the countries included in Table 1, with 1953 hours for full-time workers, while Belgium and Italy are nearly tied for the shortest full-time hours, at just over 1700. The Netherlands is often noted as the country with the shortest working hours, but this largely the result of the prevalence of part-time employment, rather than short hours among full-time workers. The full-time Dutch workers put in about the same annual hours as those in France and Germany and a number of other European countries. Unfortunately this indicator is not available for the U.S., but the fact remains that the average U.S. worker (part-time and full-time combined) puts in more hours per year on the job than the typical full-time worker in Europe.

The third and fourth columns in Table 1 present data on the average annual hours of employed persons, by gender. Here, European schedules appear much less leisurely when the data are limited to men's annual hours. For example, German men put in 1972 hours per year, or about 42 hours per week for 47 weeks. In all of the European countries except the Netherlands, men work on average between 1700 and 2000 hours. Women report a wider range of average annual hours, from a remarkable low of 1233 in the Netherlands to a high of 1749 in Sweden.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Another way to compare countries is to focus on a single industrial sector, such as manufacturing, to removing the potentially conflating effect of varying industrial mixes across countries. Two reports that compare hours in a single sector – manufacturing -- conclude that

Are the long annual hours in the U.S. principally a matter of U.S. workers having fewer annual vacation days, or do they work longer weekly hours as well? Jacobs and Gerson (1998a) report findings on weekly hours for men and women in nine industrialized countries, using data from the Luxembourg Income Study for 1989-1992. Jacobs and Gerson find that, for men, the average work week in most countries hovers just over forty hours per week, with only the Netherlands having a particularly short work week. While average weekly hours in the U.S. fall in the high end of the range, the average length of the work week in the U.S. is not especially distinctive. Where the U.S. does stand out is with respect to the dispersion of hours worked, in particular, the percentage of workers who report working very long hours. Over one-fifth of men in the U.S. (22.4 percent) put in more than 50 hours per week on the job, compared with 16.1 percent in Germany, 7.3 percent in Sweden and 3.5 percent in the Netherlands. The percentage of men working such long hours does not exceed 20 percent in any of the other countries.

Jacobs and Gerson found more dramatic cross-national variation in women's weekly hours. Women in the U.S., like their male counterparts, report among the longest work weeks in the nine countries. Women in the U.S. work an average of 36.0 hours per week, compared with 34.0 in Sweden, 33.3 in Germany, and 29.6 in the U.K. The Netherlands again stands out as having the shortest work week; the average woman in the Netherlands works 26.3 hours per week, and nearly half (49.7 percent) work fewer than thirty hours per week. Like men in the U.S., women in the U.S. stand out with respect to the percentage working 50 hours per week or more. At 7.9 percent, the percentage of U.S. women working very long hours lags that of their

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U.S. workers report the longest hours (ILO, 1995; Tabliabue, 1997).

male counterparts, but surpasses the rate observed in Germany (4.1 percent), the U.K. (2.8 percent), Sweden (2.1 percent) and the Netherlands (0.7 percent).

These cross-national comparisons suggest that the U.S. is more unusual in terms of the percentage of workers reporting very long weeks than with respect to its average work week. A growing bifurcation in working time for women and men emerges as a major feature in the U.S. context. In the empirical analyses in this study, we highlight cross-national variation in the dispersion of hours, rather than restricting our comparisons to national averages.

### *Recent Trends in Working Time*

The cross-national literature on trends in working time indicates that while working time has fallen throughout Europe over the last twenty years, it has risen in the U.S. In a study of average annual hours based on OECD data, Lehndorff (1998) reports that between 1979 and 1997, average annual hours actually worked per employee increased in the U.S.-- from 1884 to 1966 hours -- an increase equivalent to two full-time weeks of work per year. During the same years, average annual hours fell in Japan and in all of the large economies of Europe, including France, Germany, and the U.K. The decline in annual hours worked in Europe was generally greater during the 1980s than during the 1990s, but renewed efforts to reduce the work week in recent years may result in another round of change.

As Jacobs and Gerson (2001) report, the majority of the increase in annual hours in the U.S. is due to an increase in weeks worked per year, rather than rising hours worked per week.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the increase in the number of weeks worked per year has more to do with changes in women's labor force participation than with changes in the nature of employment or a reduction in the length of vacations. The falling hours throughout Europe reflect -- to varying degrees in different countries -- declines in the hours of both full-time and part-time workers, and rising rates of part-time work (OECD 1998). Unfortunately, available data on trends in annual hours do not readily allow a decomposition of the factors underlying these changes over time.

A second notable trend across European countries has been toward greater dispersion in working time. The standard workweek has increasingly given way to a wider array of formats (OECD, 1998; Mutari and Figart, 2000). This is due in part to a growth in part-time work, which has swelled the ranks of those working short hours. At the other end of the working-time distribution, European employers have also pushed for greater flexibility in work arrangements among full-time workers,<sup>6</sup> which has contributed to a growth in the proportion working long

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<sup>5</sup> Greater continuity in labor force attachment on the part of women will inevitably produce increases in the number of weeks worked per year as measured by standard labor market surveys. Many who are measured as part-year workers were, in fact, beginning a long spell of employment, but just happened to start that spell at some point in the middle of the previous calendar year. Analyses presented in a companion paper (Jacobs and Gerson, 2001) show that women's labor force participation and the proportion of women employed full-time, full-year are highly correlated. Part-year work is thus principally a measure of the extent of churning associated with labor market entries and exits.

<sup>6</sup> In the U.S. context, flexible work arrangements refer to schemes designed to help workers respond to family concerns; in Europe, the term "flexibilization" refers to employers' desire to bend regulations such as maximum hours rules to enhance productivity and/or to cut labor costs.

hours. The dispersion of working time is strongest in the U.S., where there is much less labor market regulation of wages and hours (Jacobs and Gerson, 1998a).<sup>7</sup>

Recent declines in working hours in Europe have coincided with sustained -- and highly publicized -- efforts in several countries to reduce working time. Over the last twenty years, many European labor and other advocates have fought to reduce working time, for all of the reasons discussed earlier, i.e., as a strategy for reducing unemployment, for increasing family time, and for shoring up gender equality in the market and at home (ILO 1995; OECD 1998; 32 HOURS 2000). Efforts to reduce working time have invoked a wide variety of approaches, including collective bargaining -- at the industry, branch, or enterprise level -- and diverse public policy approaches.

Calls for reducing working time are particularly active in the countries of Northern Europe. In Denmark, which currently has among the lowest average annual work hours in Europe, work time reduction is nevertheless an active issue. The Danish movement is focused on restructuring working time to meet the needs of families; in June 1998, the government announced the initiation of talks with business and labor to make working time more “family friendly.” In Sweden, also with low annual work hours, further work time reduction remains at the top of the public policy and collective bargaining agendas. As in Denmark, the theme is not job creation but, instead, “shorter work time is seen mainly as a way to improve the well-being of workers and increase equality between men and women”. In Finland, two major labor

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<sup>7</sup> The OECD data (1998) show the U.S. leading all of the countries included in this study except the U.K. The OECD results show the U.K. ahead of the U.S. on long hours by men, whereas Jacobs and Gerson (1998a) found the reverse. The difference between the two may be due to the different cutoff points (45 hours for the OECD report versus 50 hours for the Jacobs and Gerson analysis) and also to differences in data sources.

federations recently called on the government to cut the work week to 35 hours, largely as a job growth effort (32 HOURS 1998).

Active efforts to reduce the work week are gaining strength throughout continental Europe as well. In France, in 2000, the 35-hour workweek became law for firms with more than 20 employees; smaller firms will be covered by the law in 2002. The focus of the French effort was the reduction of unemployment rather than the promotion of gender equality. In 1997, prominent labor and academic leaders in Belgium called for a shift to a 35-hour work week; the main trade unions and the Socialist Party endorsed a four-day, 32-hour week. In Germany, while the legislated standard week has remained at 48 hours since the 1930s, collective bargaining has reduced the average work week, in the western Lander, to 37.5 hours. In Italy, the work week is to be reduced from 40 to 35 hours by the end of 2001 through legislation and financial incentives to guide collective bargaining. And, in the Netherlands, as part of a long government-business-labor negotiation dating to the early 1980s, the work week has been reduced to 36 hours for half of the workforce (32 HOURS 2000).

In the U.S., there have also been calls for reducing working time in the last two decades, but advocacy efforts have not gained anywhere near as much momentum -- nor sparked as much public debate -- as in Europe. In particular, calls for reducing work hours in order to combat unemployment have not received substantial support in the U.S. in recent decades (ILO 1995). However, reducing work time has been advocated in order to relieve work/family strain (Gornick and Meyers, 2000; Skocpol 2000); increase leisure (Schor 1991); facilitate gender equality in work and caregiving (Crittenden, 2001); and free time for civic engagement (Putnam 2000). Canada, in contrast, has a more active and highly visible working time movement than in the

U.S., with several labor unions and national organizations in the lead. As in the U.S., concerns about working time in Canada are eclectic, with considerable attention paid to work-family strain and constraints on leisure (32 HOURS 2000).

## **II. Analytic Approach and Research Questions.**

### *Analytic Approach*

In this study, we focus on the working time of married couples rather than of individuals for several reasons. First, we maintain that time pressures -- experienced by individuals and by families -- are affected by the employment status and the working hours of all of the adult members in a family. As Jacobs and Gerson (2001) argue, the increased time pressures experienced by families are part of a larger social shift from male-breadwinner families (with a second adult in the home full-time) toward a mix of dual-earner couples and single-parent families. We suggest that a decline in support at home rather than an increase in the working time of individuals underlies the growing sense that families are squeezed for time and that work and family life are in conflict. In other words, dual-earner families and single-parent families are likely to face time pressures because there is no one at home to take care of children and household tasks. Thus, it may be the changing demographics of families rather than the changing structure of employment that is driving the increase in the time pressures experienced by families.

Married couples are also an interesting unit of analysis in comparative research because the conditions faced by dual-earner couples vary from country to country. As we will show, the availability of part-time employment -- often taken up by wives -- varies cross-nationally, as does

the extent of public provisions for child care, as well as other factors that are likely to affect families. A focus on couples, in cross-national perspective, can reveal whether families in some countries are especially pressed for time relative to their counterparts elsewhere.

A third reason to focus on couples stems from our concerns about gender equality. While most studies of gender equality in the labor market focus on hourly wages, differentials in working time between husbands and wives -- especially in families with children -- are a major source of gender disparities in earnings and career opportunities. The question that ultimately interests us is whether there are countries that have made progress toward reducing time pressures on couples in a way that is consistent with promoting gender equality. Considering couples' joint working time in conjunction with the gender breakdown in couples' hours also provides a valuable starting point for identifying labor market and social policy provisions that are consistent with both goals, namely alleviating families' time squeeze and facilitating gender equality.

A second key analytic decision concerns the focus on weekly hours, rather than annual hours. We focus on the work week for both substantive and technical reasons. Substantively, the work week is the unit of analysis that corresponds most closely to families' needs to supervise and care for their children. While annual vacation time is also helpful with respect to caregiving pressures, extending vacation time will not diffuse much of the time pressure that families experience on a regular basis.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Note that our perspective differs from that of Robinson and Godbey (1997). They suggest that additional vacation time is the best way to provide for additional leisure, on the grounds that small increments of free time during normal weeks will simply be diverted to additional television viewing.

In addition, weekly hours can be measured more reliably than can annual hours. Accurately comparing annual hours across countries is difficult because vacation time is included in some labor force surveys but not in others (including the Current Population Survey for the U.S.). The lack of comparable data on vacation time makes it problematic to focus on annual hours.

A more fundamental problem with comparing annual hours is that measures of annual hours are sensitive to variations in the number of weeks worked, which in turn reflects labor market entrances and exits, as Jacobs and Gerson (2001) document in their analysis of trends in U.S. annual hours data. This point has important implications for comparing annual hours worked across countries. In countries with relatively low women's labor force participation, and high rates of part-time work, there will be substantial percentages of women entering and exiting the labor force. This will produce relatively short work years, and have the effect of reducing the measure of annual hours worked. Similarly, high or growing levels of unemployment would tend to cut into annual hours worked, because those losing their jobs (or just regaining employment) would tend to work less than a full year. These factors make it difficult to compare the experiences of full-year workers across countries. Our solution to this problem is to focus on the work week, and reserve cross-national variation in annual weeks of work and vacations for a separate analysis.

Our final analytic strategy calls for assessing cross-national variation in the dispersion of individuals' and couple's weekly hours, in addition to variation in average weekly hours. As noted above, there is substantial variation at the upper end of the working-time distribution, and

this may be particularly informative when comparing working time in U.S. families to that of their counterparts in other countries.

### Research Questions

In Section IV, we address a series of empirical questions about the working time of dual-earner couples:

- (1) How does the paid working time of dual-earner couples in the U.S. compare to that of their counterparts in Canada and Europe, considering both average hours and the percentage working very long hours?
- (2) How does the relationship between work hours and educational level vary across countries?
- (3) How does the difference in working time between couples with and without children vary across countries?
- (4) Which countries report the most gender egalitarian patterns of working time? We ask how gender equality is affected by the presence of children, and if gender equality is most evident in families working short, intermediate, or long hours.

We begin our analyses with some prior expectations. First, we expect that couples in the U.S. will put in the longest joint weekly hours in paid work. Prior research indicates that both men and women work slightly longer weekly hours in the U.S. than in other industrialized countries. The question remains as to how the experience of individuals maps onto those of dual-earner couples. We also expect that the proportion of couples who (jointly) work long work weeks -- more than 80, or even 100, hours per week -- will be higher in the U.S. than elsewhere. Again, we are extending earlier findings on the prevalence of very long work weeks in the U.S. by exploring the relationship between individuals' working time and the experiences of couples.

Second, in the U.S., both men and women with more educational credentials tend to work longer hours than those with less education (Jacobs and Gerson, 1998a). In our empirical analyses, we seek to establish whether this pattern is common across these ten countries, and to see if the educational differentials are as sharp and in the same direction as in the U.S.

We offer two contrasting expectations regarding the extent and direction of the education effect on working time across countries. The first, derived from the standard economics of labor supply, suggests that, because of their higher earning potential, more educated workers will work longer hours in all countries. However, the magnitude of the effect might be larger in the U.S., relative to other countries, because the education effect is likely to reflect the high level of wage inequality in the U.S. (Freeman and Bell, 1995). On the other hand, sociologists and institutional economists would predict that educational differentials in working time will vary across countries in ways that reflect local institutional arrangements, such as the coverage of working time legislation, and the existence of over-time and maximum hour provisions (Mutari and Figart, 2000). Thus, the opportunity as well as the incentive to work long hours may vary across countries in ways that favor the more educated in some places and the less educated in others.

Third, we will examine the effects of parental status on working time by comparing dual-earner couples without children to working parents. These within-country differentials capture the extent to which parental status shapes the paid work hours of parents. Our central question is whether the effects of parental status on working time are larger in the U.S. than elsewhere. Because parenting effects on labor market attachment are observed only for women in most countries (Gornick, 1999), we will focus on the effects of parenthood on wives. Here, our expectation is that parenting effects, especially for women, will be comparatively large in the

U.S., because key public policies that support parents in combining work and family -- such as public provisions for child care and paid family leave -- are comparatively limited in the U.S.

Fourth, we are interested in the patterns of working time because of their consequences for gender equality as well as for the quality of family life. With respect to gender equality in working time, our expectation is that U.S. outcomes will be relatively egalitarian among couples without children, but that gender equality in working time will lag substantially among couples with children. We expect gender equality in working time among parents in the U.S. to lag that reported in other countries for the same reason that we expect to find relatively large parenting effects for women -- i.e., supportive work/family policies are lacking in the U.S.

Finally, we are interested in knowing whether short, intermediate or long hours tend to promote more gender-egalitarian contributions to paid employment. In other words, one could make the case against extra-long hours on the grounds that they are not family-friendly. But they may also impede egalitarian time allocations within families. This will result in a curvilinear relationship between couples' working time and gender equality. In other words, dual-earner couples whose combined hours of work are relatively low will probably have small contributions from wives, and thus will exhibit a low ratio of wives' to husbands' hours. Among those couples putting in very long hours, say over 100 hours per week, there will likely be substantial contributions from working wives. But we expect that husbands will be putting in the longest hours among this group as well, since there are fewer domestic expectations that impinge on their time allocations. It will be among the couples with an intermediate amount of time devoted to paid employment where the ratio of wives' to husbands' economic contributions will be at a maximum.

### **III. Data and Methods.**

The data on working time are drawn from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), an archive of micro-datasets gathered, and rendered comparable, from a large number of industrialized countries. The LIS datasets, based principally on household surveys, contain detailed data at the individual- and household-level on a range of demographic, labor market, and income variables. There are several advantages to using the LIS data to study working time. Their micro-data structure allow a range of flexible analyses that cannot be conducted using aggregate data, such as the hours series regularly published by OECD, Eurostat, and the ILO. Furthermore, compared to other cross-national micro-datasets, the LIS sample sizes are relatively large.

This study uses nine datasets included in the fourth, and most recent, wave of LIS datasets (1994-1997): Belgium (1996), Canada (1994), France (1994), Germany (1994), Italy (1995), Netherlands (1994), Sweden (1995), the United Kingdom (1995), and the United States (1997).<sup>9</sup> Because the Finnish data in LIS's fourth wave (from 1995) did not include data on hours worked, we used LIS's third wave Finnish dataset (from 1991), which did report hours worked.

The names of the original surveys, the years to which the data pertain, and the sample sizes used in this study, are presented in Appendix Table 1. More detailed information on LIS and on the individual datasets is available on the Luxembourg Income Study web site (<http://www.lis.ceps.lu>).

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<sup>9</sup> Note that LIS's fourth wave of data also includes U.S. data for 1994. Additional analyses (not shown here) indicate that there were no significant changes in the working time patterns in the U.S. between 1994 and 1997.

Our selected sample comprises all civilian non-agricultural workers, including both self-employed and wage and salary workers. Persons are coded as “working” if they report working at least one hour in the survey reference week. We restricted the age range to 25-59 in order to maximize comparability by focusing on prime-aged workers. The lower-end cutoff of age 25 allows us to avoid most of the variation across countries in educational enrollments that might affect the working hours of younger workers. The upper-end cutoff of age 59 enables us to avoid the potentially confounding issue of early retirement that again varies markedly across countries. Since results are presented for married couples, we include couples where both the husband and wife are between the ages 25 and 59<sup>10</sup>.

Educational levels are difficult to compare across countries because of extensive variation in basic educational institutions. To assess the effects of education, we compare working time between couples with a college degree or higher and those with less than a college degree. We define college-educated couples as those in which either the husband or the wife has a college degree. The comparison group is couples in which neither member has a college degree.<sup>11, 12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The definition of marriage varies somewhat across datasets, with cohabiting couples included in six of the countries, but not in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and the U.S.

<sup>11</sup> College completion or higher was coded as follows: Belgium: higher non-university (4 years) or university; Canada: university degree; Finland: 16 years, or post-graduate education; France: university degree or higher; Germany: technical college, university, technical college or foreign university; Italy: bachelors degree or post-graduate qualification; Netherlands: tertiary lower, postgraduate or old masters, or post-doctorate; Sweden: university, or research; U.S.: bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, or doctorate. The U.K. data do not include usable educational measures.

<sup>12</sup> We also restricted educated couples to those where both husband and wife had a college degree, and the results are substantively similar to those presented here. The “either spouse” definition produces a larger sample size in countries with small datasets, such as Belgium, or relatively few college graduates, such as Italy.

#### **IV. Results.**

In all of the tables, we rank the countries in descending order with respect to one key indicator. This approach has the advantage of highlighting the relative position of the U.S., our core interest, and it allows us to see how the U.S. position, in cross-national perspective, varies across outcomes.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Table 2 presents the joint hours of paid work of husbands and wives among couples aged 25-59 in which at least one partner was employed. As reported in the first column, among the ten countries included in this analysis, U.S. couples report the longest joint hours. In the U.S., the typical married couple with at least one employed spouse puts in just over 70 (72.3) hours per week.

The length of the paid work week reflects two components: the percentage of dual-earner couples, and the length of the work week among those dual-earner couples. As reported in the second column, the U.S. trails only the two Nordic countries included in this study -- Finland and Sweden, where special efforts have been made to facilitate women's labor force participation -- in the percentage of couples in which both partners work for pay. The U.S. ranks first in Table 1 because dual-earner couples in the U.S. put in the longest work weeks (see the third column), combined with the fact that the U.S. ranks third in the proportion of dual-earner couples.

In half of the included countries (Canada, Sweden, Belgium, France and Germany), the average married couple spends between 60 and 65 hours a week in paid employment. This

reflects the fact that the majority of couples in these countries have two earners, and most employed couples work just under 80 hours per week. However, countries vary in how they achieve this result. For example, while Sweden has large numbers of married women working relatively short hours, Belgium has fewer married women working, but those who do work put in longer work weeks.

The shortest average work weeks for couples are reported in the U.K. and the Netherlands. The typical couple in the U.K. puts in 57.4 hours per week; that is 14.9 fewer hours per week than in the U.S. That is because the U.K. has the third lowest rate of married women's labor force participation (54.6 percent) and the second shortest work week among dual-earner couples (74.3 hours per week). The truly exceptional case for working time, however, is found in the Netherlands, where only a bare majority of married women work for pay (52.3 percent) and the average work week among dual-earner couples is 64.0 hours, more than 17 fewer hours per week than in the U.S.

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

While the results presented in Table 2 focus on the average paid work week among all couples, Table 3 focuses on the distribution of working hours among dual-earner couples. Among dual-earner couples, the average work week in the U.S. is relatively long, slightly longer than any of the other countries included in this analysis. It is notable that dual-earner couples in the U.K. put in nearly one fewer person-day per week on the job (6.9 fewer hours) than do their U.S. counterparts, while a typical Swedish working couple works for pay 11.9 fewer hours per

week. Thus, the time demands associated with being a part of a of dual-earner family vary across countries, with the time pressures being the greatest in the U.S.

Furthermore, the U.S. ranks first with respect to the percentage of couples working more than 80 hours per week (68.2 percent), and also in the percentage of couples working 100 or more hours per week (12.0 percent). Thus, the high end of the distribution distinguishes the U.S. more sharply than does the average work week.

The case of Finland presents an interesting comparison to the U.S. The average Finnish couple logs nearly as many hours per week as in the U.S. (77.4 for Finland, versus 81.2 in the U.S.), but the Finnish distribution is more tightly clustered. Far fewer dual-earner couples in Finland put in over 80 hours per week (25.1 percent), and very few couples work 100 hours per week or more (4.0 percent). Sweden and the Netherlands also stand out as cases in which very long work weeks are quite rare among working couples.

The results presented in Tables 2 and 3 confirm our expectation that dual-earner couples in the U.S. put in longer hours on the job than do their counterparts in other countries. The differential is small in comparison to some countries, such as Finland, but it is substantial in comparison to others, such as the U.K. and the Netherlands.

[TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

In Table 4, we compare the work weeks of dual-earner couples with and without college education. As noted above, college-educated couples are those in which either the husband or the wife had a college degree; the comparison group includes couples in which neither has a college

degree. The countries are rank-ordered with respect to the size of the educational differential in mean hours worked. The results show that, in the U.S., education is positively associated with the length of the work week. More highly educated couples tend to put in more hours working for pay than do their less educated counterparts (82.4 hours versus 80.3 hours). The differential is clearest at the extremes of the distribution; the proportion of dual-earner couples working 100 hours per week or more is substantially higher (15.2 percent) than for less educated workers (9.6 percent).

The longest work weeks are found among college educated couples in the U.S. However, surprisingly, the education differential, in percentage terms, is larger in four other countries: the Netherlands, Canada, France and Sweden. This is surprising because these countries have more limited wage inequality than does the U.S. Thus, the explanation that the education differential in working time is highest in the countries with high wage dispersion is not supported in this analysis.

In the four other countries, the education-hours relationship is different. In Finland and especially Italy, more educated couples put in substantially shorter work weeks than do their less-educated counterparts. Additional analyses (not shown) reveal that both husbands and wives in the more educated group report shorter work weeks. The German and Belgian cases are ambiguous: the average work week does not differ by education level, but the more educated are more likely to put in long work weeks.

The substantial gap between more and less educated couples in the U.S. is consistent with economists' expectation that substantial wage inequality induces the more educated to work especially long hours. But the unexpected rank order of the U.S., among these countries,

indicates that institutional factors need to be part of a comprehensive explanation of variation in working time.

[TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE]

In Table 5, we compare the paid work hours of dual-earner couples with and without children. This enables us to see how the U.S. ranks among working parents, and it also allows us to see the effect of parental status on working time across this group of countries. In Table 5, the countries are ranked with respect to the size of this parenting effect. Not surprisingly, the U.S. leads all of the comparison countries in the length of the work week for working parents (80.1 hours) as well as for childless dual-earner couples (83.0 hours). This is true for the average work week and for the percentage reporting very long weekly hours. Among childless couples, weekly hours worked in Belgium and Italy approach those reported in the U.S.-- exceeding 80 hours in both cases -- but parents in the U.S. report a substantially longer work week than do their counterparts in all of the other countries.

The effect of parenting on couples' total working time varies markedly across the countries included in this study. In the U.S., working parents put in 2.9 fewer hours per week than do their childless counterparts. In percentage terms, that differential (-3.5 percent) is similar to the pattern found in Canada (-3.3 percent) and Sweden (-3.7 percent). In five of the countries included here (Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the U.K), working parents put in at least 5 percent fewer hours on the job than do their childless counterparts. In two other countries, Finland and France, there is hardly any difference at all in the work week between working parents and other working couples.

Table 5 also reports parenting effects for husbands and wives separately. As expected, the effect of being a parent on hours spent in the labor market are much larger for women, overall, than for men. For wives, being a parent is associated with a reduction in working hours in all ten countries; the magnitude of the effect ranges from 3.0 percent or less (in France and Finland), to 8.6 percent in the U.S., to 20 percent or more (in Germany, the U.K., and the Netherlands). For husbands, the effects are much smaller and are typically slightly positive; across these ten countries, the men's parenting effect ranges from -3.8 percent (in Italy) to +1.8 percent (in Germany). Women's reductions, associated with having dependent children in the home, are larger than men's everywhere. Thus -- Belgium and Italy excepted -- reductions in couples' s hours associated with parenthood are entirely accounted for by reductions in working time among wives.

The results in Table 5 also confirm the expectation that there is a relatively large parenting effect on working time among employed wives in the U.S. The parenting effect among U.S. wives is substantially larger than the differential seen among their counterparts in Finland and France; at the same time, parenting reductions are much larger still in the U.K. and in three continental European countries (Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands). As we will discuss in Section VI, the cross-national variation that we find can be explained, at least in part, by variation in some key labor market institutions and public policies, including the level of demand for part-time work and the extent of public child care provisions.

[TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE]

Table 6 reports the hours worked for pay by employed husbands and wives separately, allowing us to see the contributions of each to couples' joint hours. Again, the results highlight the importance of considering the distribution of working time in addition to the central tendency. The paid work week of married men clusters between 41 and 45 hours in all countries except Sweden, which trails at 38.1 hours per week. The U.S. has the second longest work week for married men (at 44.8 hours per week, just trailing Belgium at 44.9), but the U.S. clearly surpasses all of the other included countries in the proportion of married men working 50 hours per week or more. At just under one-third (30.3 percent), the percentage of married men working over 50 hours per week in the U.S. is nearly triple that in Finland (10.4 percent) and more than ten times as high as in Sweden (2.8 percent).

Married women in the U.S. (36.4 hours) rank second only to Finnish women (37.2 hours) in the length of their average paid work week. The U.K. (30.8 hours per week) and especially the Netherlands (22.4 hours per week) stand out as having the shortest average work weeks for married women. But again, the dispersion is higher in the U.S. than elsewhere. While the U.S. ties Belgium and Italy in having the highest percentage of married women working over 50 hours per week (10 percent), such long weeks are nearly unknown for married women in Sweden (0.4 percent) and the Netherlands (1.7 percent).

The three right-hand columns on Table 6 report cross-national variation in gender equality in hours, captured in the ratio of wives' to husbands' average weekly hours. Results are presented for all wives in dual-earner couples, then separately for those with and without children (age 18 or younger). As we expected, gender equality in working hours in the U.S. is high -- absolutely and relatively -- among women without parenting responsibilities (.86), tying with

Sweden for second place. However, among mothers (in dual-earner couples), U.S. women fare less well cross-nationally. The far right column indicates that, among parents, the ratio of wives' to husbands' hours in the U.S. falls to .78, and here the U.S. outcome lags Sweden (.79), Italy (.80), France (.81), and especially Finland (.92).

[TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE]

In the research questions section above, we outlined our expectation that gender equality within families in paid working time would be highest in families that work intermediate numbers of hours. How do the results from our ten countries conform to this set of expectations? Our expectations are met in seven of the ten countries considered, although there are three exceptions where wives' economic contributions are highest in the busiest families. Results are presented in Table 7.

Let us begin with the U.S. case. The most gender-balanced contributions to the labor market occur in couples that put in more than 80 -- but fewer than 100 -- hours per week. Among couples working fewer than 60 joint hours per week, wives contribute less than half as much time (.37) relative to their husbands. This ratio rises to .67 among couples working between 60-79 hours per week, peaks among these couples working 80-99 hours per week (.91) and falls again among those working 100 or more hours per week (.84).

This is the general pattern we expected, and it holds for Canada, Germany, the U.K., and the Netherlands, in addition to the U.S. A similar pattern is seen in Sweden and Finland. In these two Nordic countries, gender-egalitarianism peaks between 60 and 79 hours per week, but the

relationship retains its curvilinear shape. Indeed, Finnish couples working 60-79 hours have the most gender-balanced time contributions reported in Table 7, with wives contributing 96 percent as much time to the labor market as their husbands.

There are three cases -- Italy, Belgium, and France -- which do not entirely conform to this pattern. In Italy, the most gender-egalitarian working time is found among the busiest couples; in other words, the gender ratio increases as total working time rises. In Belgium and France, gender egalitarianism essentially plateaus after couples reach 60 joint hours of paid work per week. The results thus provide partial support for the expectation offered regarding the relationship between gender equality in working time, within couples, and the length of the joint work week.

## **V. Policy and Institutional Factors that Influence U.S. Working Time.**

Our empirical results reveal several salient features of U.S. couples' working time, in cross-national perspective. Dual-earner couples in the U.S. put in the longest hours per week among the countries included in this study. This reflects the fact that in the U.S., husbands report the second-longest mean hours per week across these countries (44.8 hours) but, even more distinctively, the highest percentage working 50 hours or more (30.3 percent). Wives in dual-earner couples in the U.S. also work long hours (36.4 hours on average) and are most likely to work 50 or more hours per week (10.2 percent). In addition, while U.S. dual-earner couples without children rank high with respect to gender equality in hours spent in paid work, the gender ratio among couples with children falls substantially, both absolutely and relatively.

In this section, we turn our attention to some key policy and institutional factors that may help explain the distinctive working time patterns reported in the U.S. First, we consider *the direct control of working time*, through collective agreements and the regulation of maximum hours by statute; we expect these two factors, working together, to most affect husbands' hours. Second, we assess a key labor market institutional factor, *the level of demand for part-time work*, which we expect to directly influence the working hours of wives (and, by extension, the joint hours of couples). A third factor is *the availability and hours of public early childhood education and care*; we expect public child care provisions to shape the extent to which mothers and fathers in dual-earner couples establish gender egalitarian patterns of working time.

Most industrialized countries -- the U.S. excepted -- directly regulate standard as well as maximum working time for large shares of the labor force; controls operate through a combination of collective and statutory regulations. In most European countries, collective agreements covering the majority of employees establish standard working hours (Rubery, Smith, and Fagan, 1998), and statutory limitations simultaneously regulate maximum hours, usually by setting legal limits on normal weekly hours, weekly overtime hours, and/or total weekly hours (ILO 1995; OECD 1998). These working time controls should play a discernable role in shaping men's hours, in particular. Men's employment patterns -- both their participation and hours -- are relatively inelastic to other policy and institutional factors that are known to shape women's working time, such as the level of demand for part-time work and the provision of services aimed at helping parents balance work and family (e.g., child care).

[TABLE 8 ABOUT HERE]

Table 8 presents collectively agreed working time (expressed as the length of the standard week) and indicates whether statutory restrictions on maximum hours exist as well; the countries are ranked by the proportion of husbands working 50 plus hours per week (in descending order). Rubery, Smith and Fagan (1998) argue that “national systems of regulation [collective and statutory] can be seen to have a major impact on usual working time (p. 75)” and the results in Table 8 lend support to that conclusion. The long hours reported by men in the U.S. are apparently driven upward by the combination of low union density -- relatively few U.S. workers are affected by collective bargaining -- and the absence of statutory controls on maximum hours. (The U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 regulates overtime pay, but does not limit total hours worked, and it does not cover all workers.)

Variation in men’s hours *among* the other countries in this study is more difficult to explain, and deserves further attention. Furthermore, Table 8 reveals that in several European countries, men’s mean hours (column 1) exceed the standard working hours agreed upon collectively (see, e.g., Belgium). One likely explanation is that self-employed workers -- who are included in our study -- work substantially longer hours than employees (Rubery, Smith, and Fagan, 1998). Self-employed workers, not covered by the working time controls, will push mean labor force hours above the standard work week for employees.

Second, a large literature on part-time work establishes that rates of part-time work vary markedly across the industrialized countries, and that part-time work remains “women’s work” everywhere (Rubery, Smith, and Fagan, 1998; Gornick, 1999; OECD, 1994, 1999). The literature on part-time work also establishes that sorting out the demand- and supply-side factors that shape

levels of part-time work is extremely complex (Bardasi and Gornick, forthcoming; Fagan and O'Reilly, 1998; Hakim, 1997). Nevertheless, we concur with Addabbo's (1997) view that "[d]emand-side constraints seem to be the overriding determinants of the level of part-time work (p.129)". In turn, levels of demand for part-time work are understood to be shaped by policy and other institutional factors, including the structure of social insurance rules, taxes and subsidies that reward or penalize the creation the part-time jobs, and the preferences and power of unions.

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Levels of demand for part-time work, proxied by the percentage of female employment that is part-time (less than 30 hours), are shown on the horizontal axis in Figure 1. Rates of part-time employment in the female labor market vary from a low of 10 percent in Italy and Finland, to 20-22 percent in the U.S. and France, up to a high of 53 percent in the Netherlands. In Figure 1, we see a strong correlation between the overall level of demand for part-time work and the mean hours of wives' in dual-earning couples (the vertical axis).<sup>13</sup> Our interpretation of this figure is that the variation on the horizontal axis -- which reflects a number of policy and institutional features -- is shaping the variation on the vertical axis, rather than the other way around.

We cannot discern from Figure 1 exactly what mechanisms are at work in relation to women's preferences. In countries with high levels of demand for part-time work, are more

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<sup>13</sup> Note that a graph with couples' joint hours on the vertical axis, rather than wives', looks nearly the same.

women working part-time (and hence shorter average hours) because job-seekers who “prefer” part-time work are more able to secure it, or because a larger share of job-seekers who “prefer” full-time work find themselves pushed into part-time employment?<sup>14</sup>

A large body of scholarship on part-time employment suggests that both dynamics are operating. Many women, especially mothers, do seek part-time hours, especially when their children are young. In some countries -- such as Italy and Finland and, to some extent, the U.S. -- a substantial share of these women will be unable to secure (acceptable) part-time work and will work full-time hours instead. Their high rates of full-time employment contribute to the relatively long weekly hours worked by wives and, in turn, by couples. In contrast, their counterparts in the United Kingdom, Sweden, and especially in the Netherlands, once in the labor market, face much greater demand for part-time workers, contributing to their shorter average weekly hours (again, for both wives and couples).

At the same time, in some countries, many women job-seekers are effectively pushed into part-time work. Burchell et al. (1997) note, for example, that in response to labor shortages in the 1960s, the U.K. enacted an official policy of developing part-time work and recruiting married women to fill the jobs. The authors conclude that the “ramifications of this are still being experienced today (p. 211)”. All told, demand for part-time work is much higher in some

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<sup>14</sup> In theory, the extent to which women prefer part-time work could be ascertained by analyzing rates of “voluntary part-time work”, i.e., the percentage of part-time workers who report that they sought part-time hours. In reality, many women who do not “prefer” part-time work in any fundamental way, in fact, seek part-time work because of substantial constraints on the supply side, for example, a lack of acceptable child care. These part-time workers are counted as “voluntary”, underscoring our conclusion that measured rates of “voluntary part-time work” actually reveal very little about women’s preferences. See Bardasi and Gornick (forthcoming) for further discussion of this point.

countries than in others. As a result, wives in those countries who seek part-time work are more likely to find it, while some share of job seekers who would prefer full-time work find themselves limited to part-time hours. Together, the result is that higher demand for part-time workers exerts downward pressure on the weekly hours of wives and, in turn, on the joint hours of couples.

[TABLE 9 ABOUT HERE]

Third, a range of public policies that support mothers' employment -- most notably, the availability and hours of public early childhood education and care -- also influence women's time spent in paid work, especially relative to their husbands'. As we reported in Table 6, when we compare the ratio of married mothers' hours to married fathers' hours, the result for U.S. parents indicates a fairly moderate level of gender equality. In Table 9, where countries are ranked according to this ratio, we see that U.S. women face very limited availability of public care for children below age three; only 5 percent of infants and toddlers are in publicly-provided or publicly-financed care. Public provisions for preschoolers (children aged 3-5) in the U.S. are more extensive, with 54 percent of children in some form of public care (including 5 year olds in kindergarten); however, much of that care is available only part-day. Overall, provisions in the U.S. for children below primary school age lag those in most European countries, either in total public slots or in the hours that care is available. All of the countries with more gender egalitarian allocations of working time among parents -- Finland, France, Italy, and Sweden -- have made more extensive public investments in child care for children below school age.

The relatively low levels of child care in the U.S., combined with restricted hours of availability, clearly works against gender egalitarian divisions among parents' in their time spent in paid work. In the U.S., as everywhere, women perform the majority of caregiving work; the lack of child care -- and its part-day nature -- drives a wedge between husbands and wives' hours. It is important to note, however, that we cannot easily sort out the impact of the level of demand for part-time work, from the effects of child care, in that there is considerable co-variation. In Italy, for example, the long weekly hours of employed wives are likely shaped by both the very restricted part-time work options as well as the availability of nearly universal, full-day, preschool coverage for children starting at the third birthday.

## **VI. Conclusions.**

The twin goals of work-family balance and gender equality have not been achieved in any of the countries examined in this study. Indeed, in the search for a model country, tradeoffs become immediately apparent. The Netherlands has gone furthest among these countries in lessening work-family conflict (by reducing couples' working time), but at the price of dramatic gender inequality in working time. Dutch women typically work part time, and put in shorter weeks than in any of the comparison countries. While progress towards work-family balance in the Netherlands might be substantial, in the end, Dutch wives are highly economically dependent on their husbands. The result in Sweden is parallel, although less extreme. Relatively short hours for Swedish men and plentiful part-time work for women has helped to reduce work-family conflict, but the gender disparity in working time, especially among working parents, remains substantial.

Finland has gone the farthest in achieving gender equality in paid working time. Finnish married women work 93 percent as many hours as their husbands, and even working mothers put in 92 percent as many hours on the job as do their husbands. But the typical Finnish couple works nearly 80 hours per week (77.4 hours); thus, the price of gender equality appears to be substantial time pressures in dual-earner families. Recent efforts to reduce the work week in Finland, and elsewhere, deserve attention.

The U.S. stands out in terms of the percentage of husbands and wives working very long hours, in addition to long average work weeks. Very long joint hours are associated with time pressures as well as gender inequality. In the U.S., as in most countries, the gender gap in working time peaks among those couples working 100 or more hours per week. More moderate work schedules promote gender equality while reducing work-family conflict.

These cross-national comparisons illuminate why time pressures faced by working families in the U.S. have become a focal point for so much research and public debate. Reducing the long work weeks in the U.S. might begin with extending existing labor legislation to professionals and managers. They are the workers who put in the longest hours (Jacobs and Gerson, 1998a; U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, 2000), and they are generally exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act and its amendments. At the same time, steps should be taken to improve the remuneration, job security, and advancement opportunities of part-time workers, most of whom are women. Strengthening protections for part-time workers would reduce the costs to workers of working part-time, and would make engagement in part-time work a more viable option for many working parents (Bardasi and Gornick, forthcoming; Jacobs and Gerson, 1998b). Future research should track the ongoing efforts to reduce working time throughout

Europe. Understanding the impact of these efforts on labor productivity, wages, employment levels, and, importantly, gender equality, both on the job and in the household, will help to inform policy choices in the United States.

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Table 1. Annual Hours Worked for Selected Countries

	A. Average Annual Hours Hours Actually Worked Per Person, 1999	B. Average Annual Hours, Full Time Workers, 1993	C. Average Annual Hours Men, 1994	D. Average Annual Hours Women, 1994
U.S.	1976			
Canada	1777 b			
Finland	1765		1801.5	1660.6
U.K.	1720	1952.7	1973.8	1469.2
Italy	1648 a	1709.7	1766.1	1600.8
Belgium	1635 a	1711.2	1728.5	1512.1
Sweden	1634		1906.2	1748.8
France	1604 a	1790.0	1792.2	1595.4
Germany	1556	1738.7	1972.2	1595.4
Netherlands	1368 a	1788.4	1679.4	1233.4

a=1998; b=1997

Sources:

Column A. OECD Employment Outlook 2000

Column B. Eurostat 1995, as cited in Lendorff, 2000

Columns C & D. ILO Key Indicators of the Labour Market, 1999

Note: Countries are ranked in relation the first column.

Table 2. Joint Hours of Paid Work of Married Couples, Aged 25-59

	All Couples Mean Hours Per Week	% Dual- Earner	Dual- Earner Couples Mean Hours Per Week
U.S.	72.3	75.5%	81.2
Finland	69.8	80.6%	77.4
Canada	65.0	65.6%	77.0
Sweden	64.0	85.1%	69.3
Belgium	63.8	57.5%	79.0
France	62.1	61.3%	76.3
Germany	60.4	55.9%	75.1
Italy	59.4	45.7%	78.2
U.K.	57.4	54.6%	74.3
Netherlands	51.9	52.3%	64.0

Source: Authors' analysis of fourth wave LIS data.

Note: Countries are ranked in relation to the first column.

Table 3. Joint Hours of Paid Work of Dual-Earner Couples, Aged 25-59

	Mean Hours/Week	%80hrs +	%100hrs +
U.S.	81.2	68.2%	12.0%
Belgium	79.0	35.0%	11.7%
Italy	78.2	47.6%	9.6%
Finland	77.4	25.1%	4.0%
Canada	77.0	46.5%	9.0%
France	76.3	32.9%	4.0%
Germany	75.1	42.7%	8.3%
U.K.	74.3	34.4%	5.8%
Sweden	69.3	6.6%	0.7%
Netherlands	64.0	15.8%	2.7%

Source: Authors' analysis of fourth wave LIS data

Note: Countries are ranked in relation to the first column.

Table 4. Joint Hours of Paid Work of Dual-Earner Couples, Aged 25-59, by Educational Level.

	A. Dual-Earner Couples, Either with College Degree			B. Dual-Earner Couples, Neither with College Degree			C. % Difference, Mean Hours
	Mean Joint Hours	%80+	%100+	Mean Joint Hours	%80+	%100+	
Netherlands	66.7*	18.4*	1.8	62.4	14.3	3.2	+6.9%
Canada	79.0*	51.4*	12.9*	76.1	44.4	4.5	+3.8%
France	78.4*	49.0*	8.3*	75.9	29.6	3.1	+3.3%
Sweden	70.4*	6.9	0.4	68.5	6.4	0.9	+2.8%
U.S.	82.4*	68.8*	15.2*	80.3	67.8	9.6	+2.6%
Belgium	78.6	43.6*	11.7	79.1	32.1	11.8	-0.6%
Germany	74.3	40.2	12.3*	75.4	43.6	6.9	-1.5%
Finland	75.7*	24.4*	1.2*	77.6	25.3	4.4	-2.4%
Italy	69.3*	27.1*	4.6*	80.4	52.7	10.9	-13.8%

\* Within-country difference is statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .

Source: Authors' analysis of fourth wave LIS data.

Note: Countries are ranked in relation to the seventh column.

The U.K. is omitted because the LIS dataset lacks a comparable education indicator.

Table 5. Joint Hours of Paid Work of Dual-Earner Couples, Aged 25-59,  
by Parental Status

	A. Dual-Earner Couples No Children <=18		B. Dual-Earner Parents Children <=18		C. Difference in Means		
	Mean Hours	%80+	Mean	%80+ Hours	Couples	Husbands	Wives
Finland	77.8	25.8%	77.2	24.8%	-0.8%	+0.8%	-2.6%
France	76.7	34.9%	76.1	32.0%	-0.8%	-0.3%	-2.3%
Canada	78.5*	51.4%*	75.9	43.0%	-3.3%	+0.7%	-7.8%
U.S.	83.0*	73.2%*	80.1	65.2%	-3.5%	+0.7%	-8.6%
Sweden	70.9*	9.0%*	68.3	5.1%	-3.7%	+0.5%	-8.2%
Italy	81.4*	56.2%*	76.7	43.6%	-5.8%	-3.8%	-8.1%
Belgium	82.4*	37.3%*	77.2	33.8%	-6.3%	-1.3%	-12.4%
Germany	78.7*	52.8%*	72.1	34.5%	-8.4%	+1.8%	-21.0%
U.K.	77.8*	41.6%*	71.3	28.2%	-8.4%	+1.5%	-21.2%
Netherlands	69.1*	25.7%*	61.1	10.1%	-11.6%	+0.2%	-29.2%

\* Within-country difference is statistically significant,  $p < .05$

Source: Authors' analysis of fourth wave LIS data.

Note: Countries are ranked in relation to the fifth column.

Table 6. Husbands' and Wives' Hours of Paid Work Among Dual-Earner Couples, Aged 25-59

	Husbands' Hours		Wives' Hours		Ratio:		
	Mean	% 50 +	Mean	% 50 +	Wives' Mean/Husbands' Mean	without children <=18	with children <=18
Finland	42.0	10.4	37.2	2.6	.93	.95	.92
Sweden	38.1	2.8	31.3	0.4	.82	.86	.79
France	42.0	18.1	34.3	4.7	.82	.83	.81
Italy	43.1	26.7	35.1	10.0	.81	.84	.80
U.S.	44.8	30.3	36.4	10.2	.81	.86	.78
Canada	43.0	23.0	34.0	7.1	.79	.83	.76
Belgium	44.9	27.2	34.1	10.1	.76	.82	.73
Germany	44.0	24.7	31.1	6.3	.71	.81	.63
U.K.	44.2	24.3	30.1	4.0	.68	.77	.60
Netherlands	41.7	15.8	22.3	1.7	.53	.66	.46

Source: Authors' analysis of fourth wave LIS data.

Note: Countries are ranked in relation to the fifth column.

Table 7. Ratio of Wives' to Husbands' Hours of Paid Work Among Dual-Earner Couples, Aged 25-59, by Total Hours of Joint Paid Employment

	Total Hours of Joint Paid Employment				
	Total	<60	60-79	80-99	100+
Finland	.93	.54	.96	.91	.83
Sweden	.82	.58	.87	.83	.65
France	.82	.50	.86	.83	.86
Italy	.81	.64	.79	.83	.92
U.S.	.81	.37	.67	.91	.84
Canada	.79	.43	.78	.87	.85
Belgium	.76	.53	.81	.82	.83
Germany	.71	.41	.67	.87	.77
U.K.	.68	.39	.70	.79	.72
Netherlands	.53	.36	.60	.73	.59

Source: Authors' analysis of fourth wave LIS data.

Note: Countries are ranked in relation to the first column.

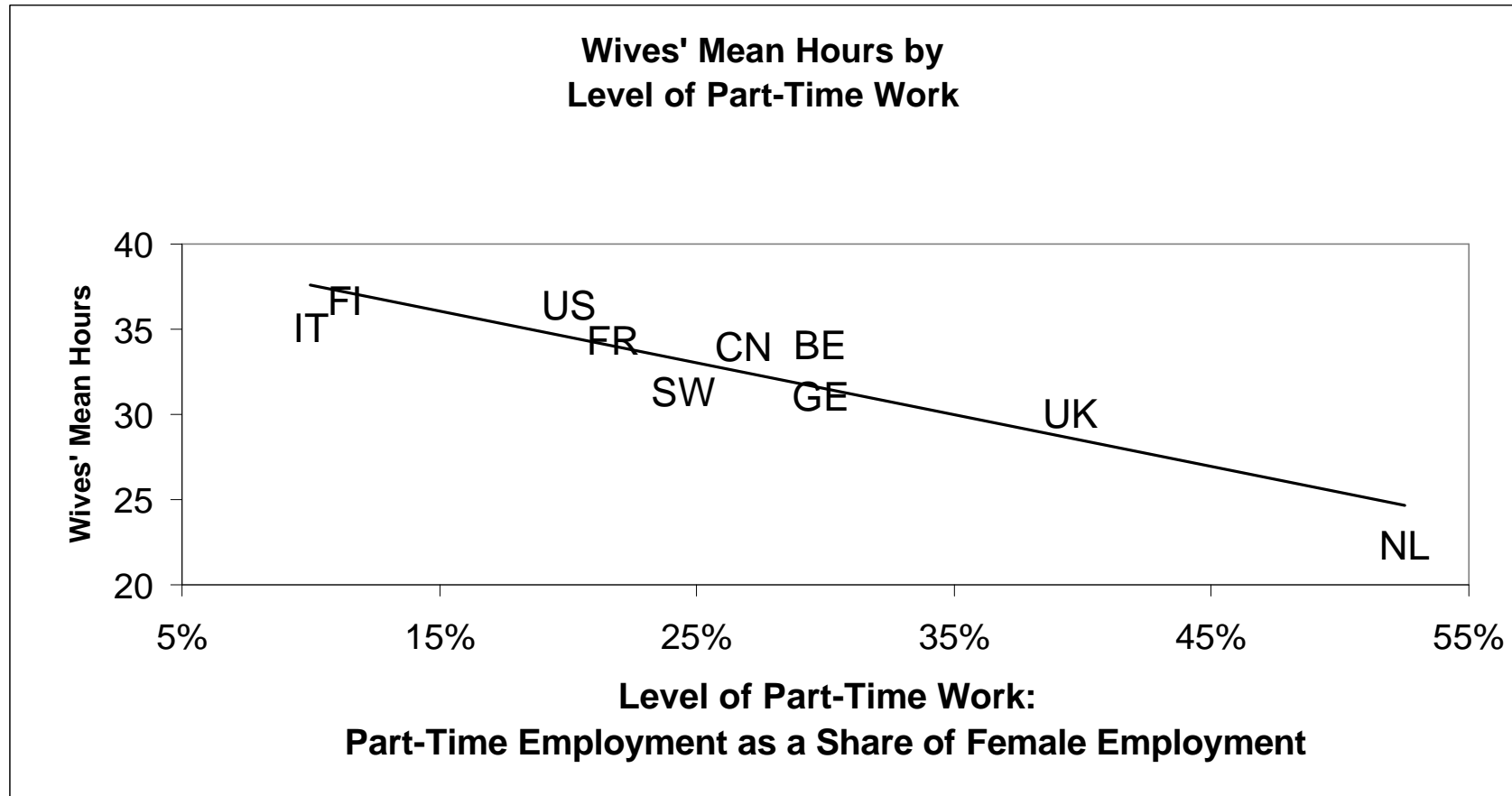
Table 8. Collective Agreement and Direct Regulation of Working Time, Middle 1990s.

	Husbands: Mean Hours (Table 6, column 1)	Husbands: Percent Working 50 Hours + (Table 6, column 2)	Standard Working Hours Agreed Collectively	Maximum Hours Regulated by Statute?
U.S.	44.8	30.3	not available (but union density only 15%)	no
Belgium	44.9	27.2	38-40	yes
Italy	43.1	26.7	36-40	yes
Germany	44.0	24.7	37.5-40	yes
U.K.	44.2	24.3	34-39	no
Canada	43.0	23.0	not available	yes
France	42.0	18.1	39	yes
Netherlands	41.7	15.8	38	yes
Finland	42.0	10.4	not available	yes
Sweden	38.1	2.8	not available	yes

Note: Countries are ranked in relation to second column.

Sources: Standard working hours agreed collectively from Rubery, Smith, and Fagan (1998). Regulation of maximum hours from ILO (1995), Table 2.

Figure 1.



Sources: Women's mean hours from Table 6, column 3. Part-time employment rates (except Italy) from OECD (1999), Italy from OECD (1994). Part-time work is defined as fewer than 30 usual hours per week in the main job.

Table 9. Availability of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), Middle 1990s.

Country (Ratio of Mothers' / Fathers' Hours).	Share of Children Served in Publicly-Financed Care, Ages 0,1,2	Share of Children Served in Publicly-Financed Care, Ages 3,4,5	Typical Schedule of Primary Form of Care for Children, Ages 3,4,5
Finland (.92)	21%	53%	full day
France (.81)	23%	99%	full day
Italy (.80)	6%	91%	full day
Sweden (.79)	33%	72%	full day
U.S. (.78)	5%	54%	part day
Canada (.76)	5%	53%	part day
Belgium (.73)	30%	95%	full day
Germany (.63)	2%	78%	part day
U.K. (.60)	5%	60%	mixed
Netherlands (.46)	8%	71%	mixed

Note: The ordering of the countries corresponds to one indicator of gender equality in working time: the ratio of mothers' to fathers' hours. (See column 7 in Table 6).

Source on child care: Gornick and Meyers, 2000.

Appendix Table 1. Luxembourg Income Study Datasets by Country

<u>Country</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Survey Name</u>	<u>Sample Size</u>
Belgium	1996	Socio-economische panelstudie van Belgische huishoudens (CSB-panel) (Belgian Household Panel Study - CSP panel)	1,522
Canada	1994	Survey of Consumer Finances.	14,605
Finland	1991	Income Distribution Survey.	5,397
France	1994	Family Budget Survey	3,668
Germany	1994	SOEP (Socio-Economic Panel)	2,812
Italy	1995	L'Indagine Campionaria sui Bilanci delle Famiglie Italiane. (The Bank of Italy Income Survey)	3,299
Netherlands	1994	Aanvullend Voorzieningengebruik Onderzoek (AVO) Additional Enquiry on the Use of (Public) Services	2,017
Sweden	1995	Inkomstfördelningsundersökningen (HINK) (Income distribution Survey)	4,718
U.K.	1995	Family Expenditure Survey (FES)	2,194
U.S.	1997	Current Population Survey	17,900

Note: Sample size refers to the total number of couples aged 25-59 included in the analysis.