

Working Time and Workers' Preferences in Industrialized Countries: Finding the Balance

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Overview of the Presentation

- **Background: Why consider workers' needs and preferences?**
- **Overview of the report**
- **Some evidence from the report**
- **Implications for policy: The Five Dimensions of 'Decent Working Time'**
- **Conclusion**

Background

Why consider workers' needs and preferences?

- **New patterns in consumer demand in an emerging '24-hour economy'**
- **Advances in information and communications technologies (ICTs)**
- **Increasingly diverse workforce, esp. with increased female participation**
- **Result: Diversification, decentralization, and individualization of working hours**

Overview of the Report

- **Focus of the report: working time 'gaps' as a 'social phenomenon'**
- **Objectives of the report:**
 - To determine what WT 'gaps' exist, and
 - To see what types of policy measures would help reduce gaps *and* expand the range of feasible options

Overview of the Report

- **Study's approach—Look at workers' needs and preferences regarding working time**
- **Compare workers' needs and preferences with their actual hours of work**
- **Thus, identify 'gaps' between workers' current hours and their preferred hours**
- **Also consider other measures of WT 'gaps'**
 - e.g, excessive hours and involuntary part-time

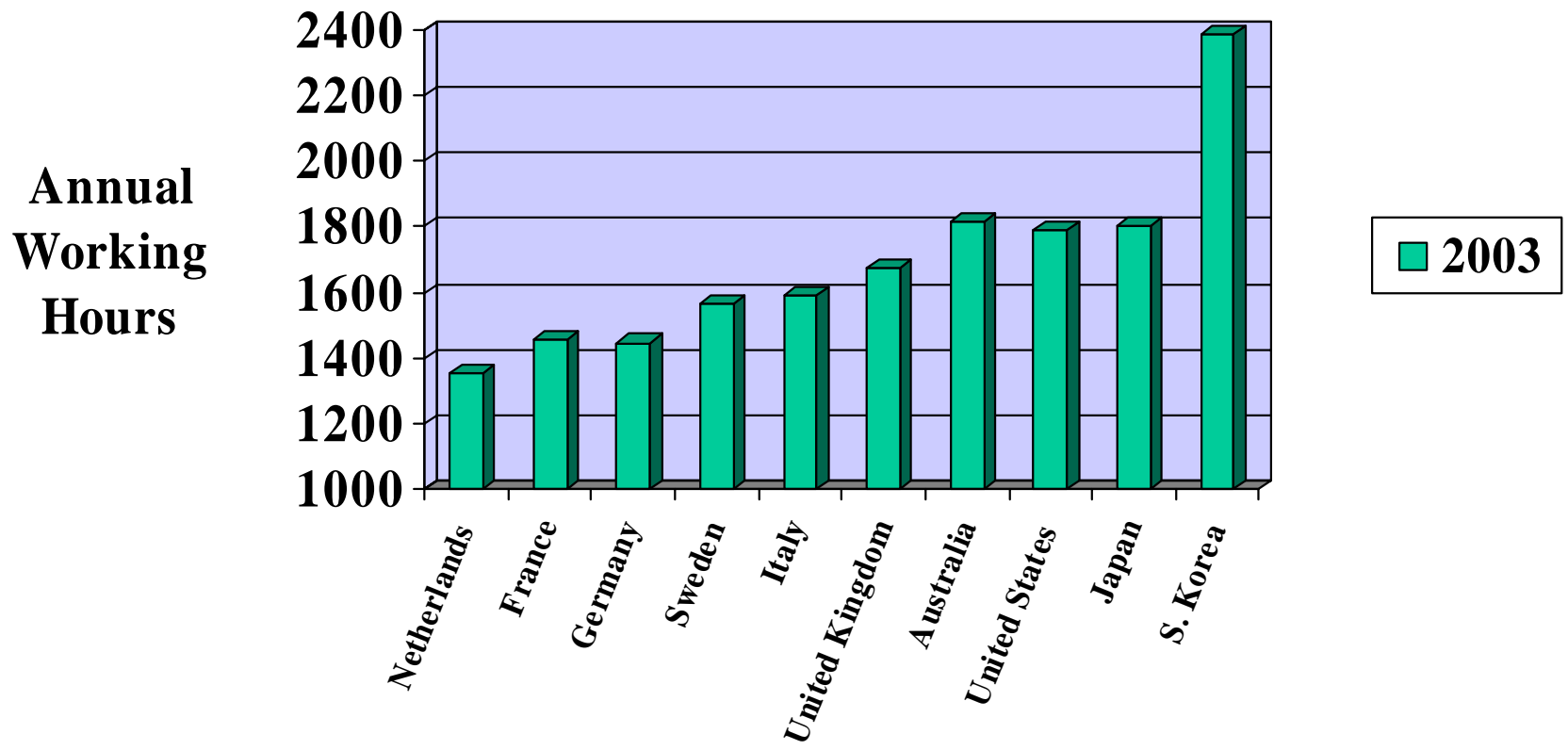
Overview of the Report

- **Report considers working time from five different perspectives:**
 - Legal and regulatory framework
 - Actual working hours at national level
 - Working time patterns from the perspective of families (households)
 - Gender differentials in working time
 - Working time practices in enterprises
- **Each chapter is comparative, focusing on EU-15, Australia, Japan, and the US**

Some Evidence from the Report

- **Gaps in the number (volume) of hours**
 - Based on worker's preferences
 - Based on other measures of working hour 'surpluses' and 'deficits'
- **Gaps in work schedules (timing)**
- **Household differences**
- **Gender differences**

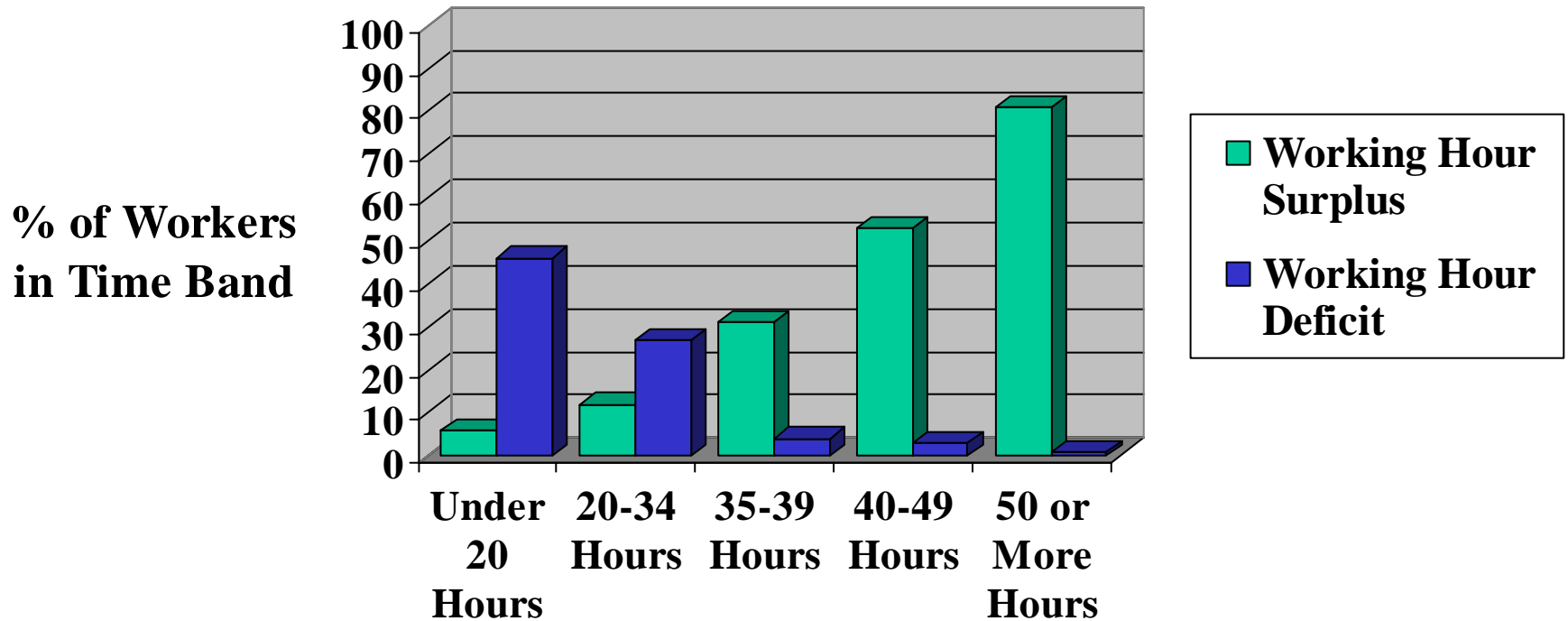
Annual Working Hours in Industrialized Countries



SOURCE: OECD Labour Market Statistics

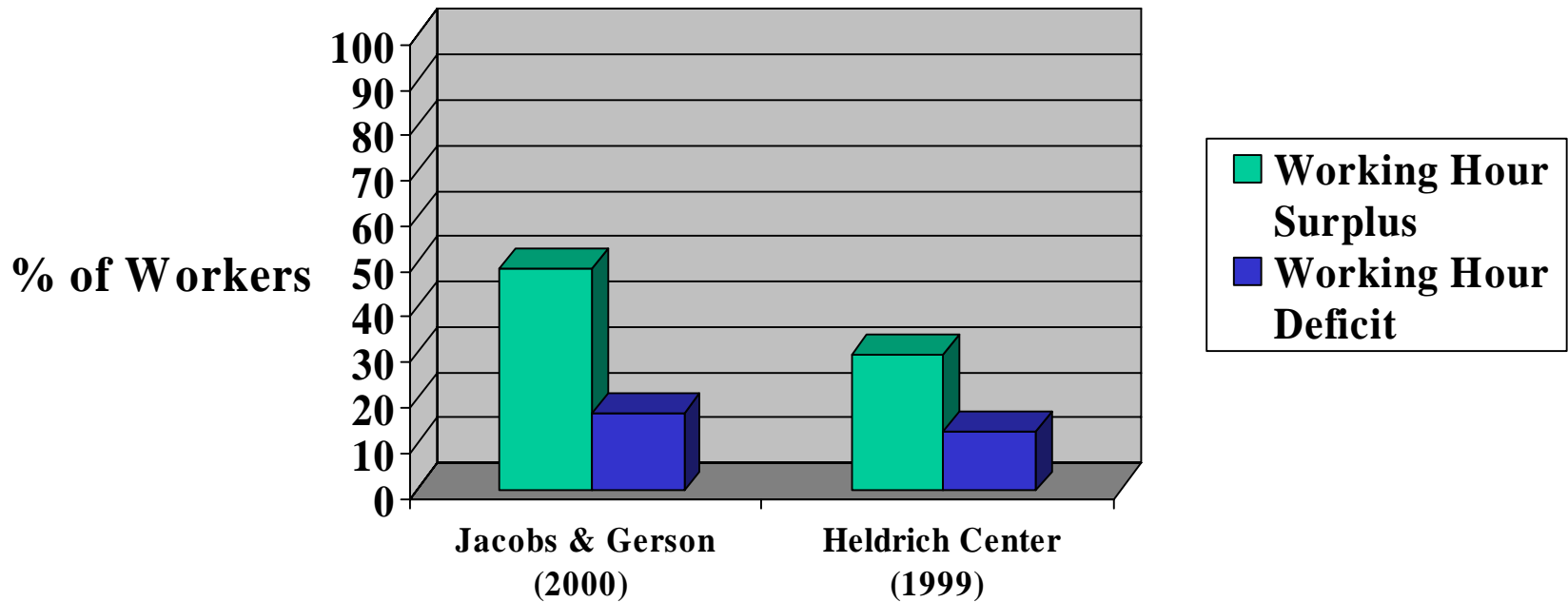
'Gaps' in Working Hour Preferences

EU Member States (Old EU-15)

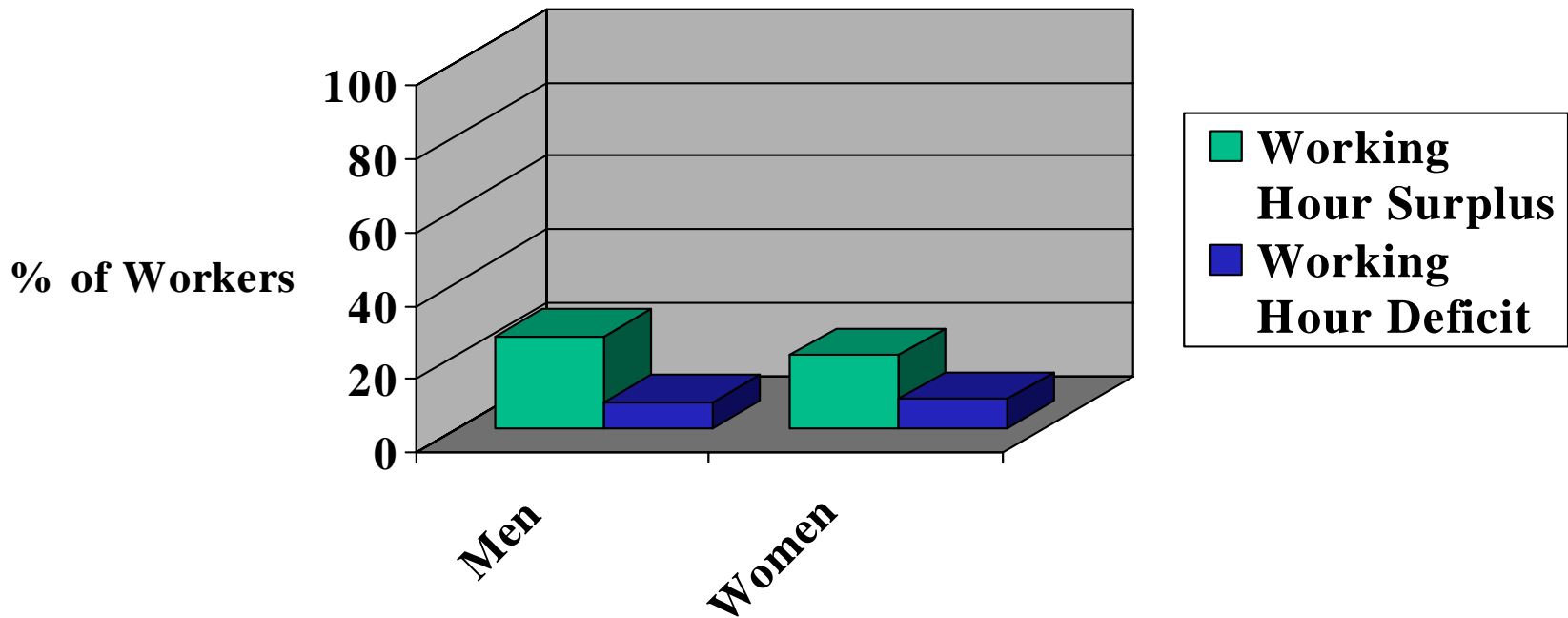


SOURCE: European Options Survey, 1998

'Gaps' in Working Hour Preferences United States



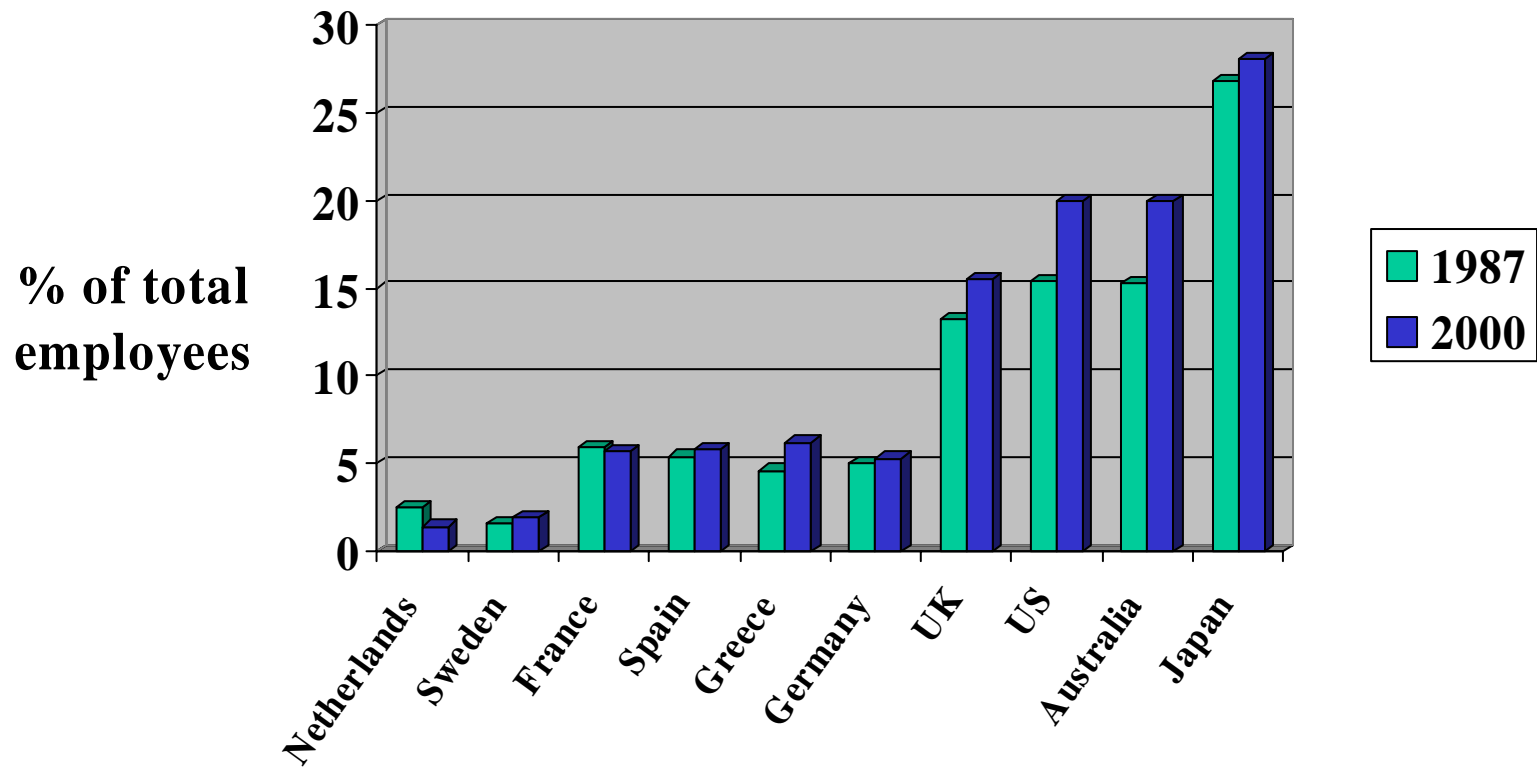
'Gaps' in Working Hour Preferences Japan



SOURCE: Employment Status Survey, 2001

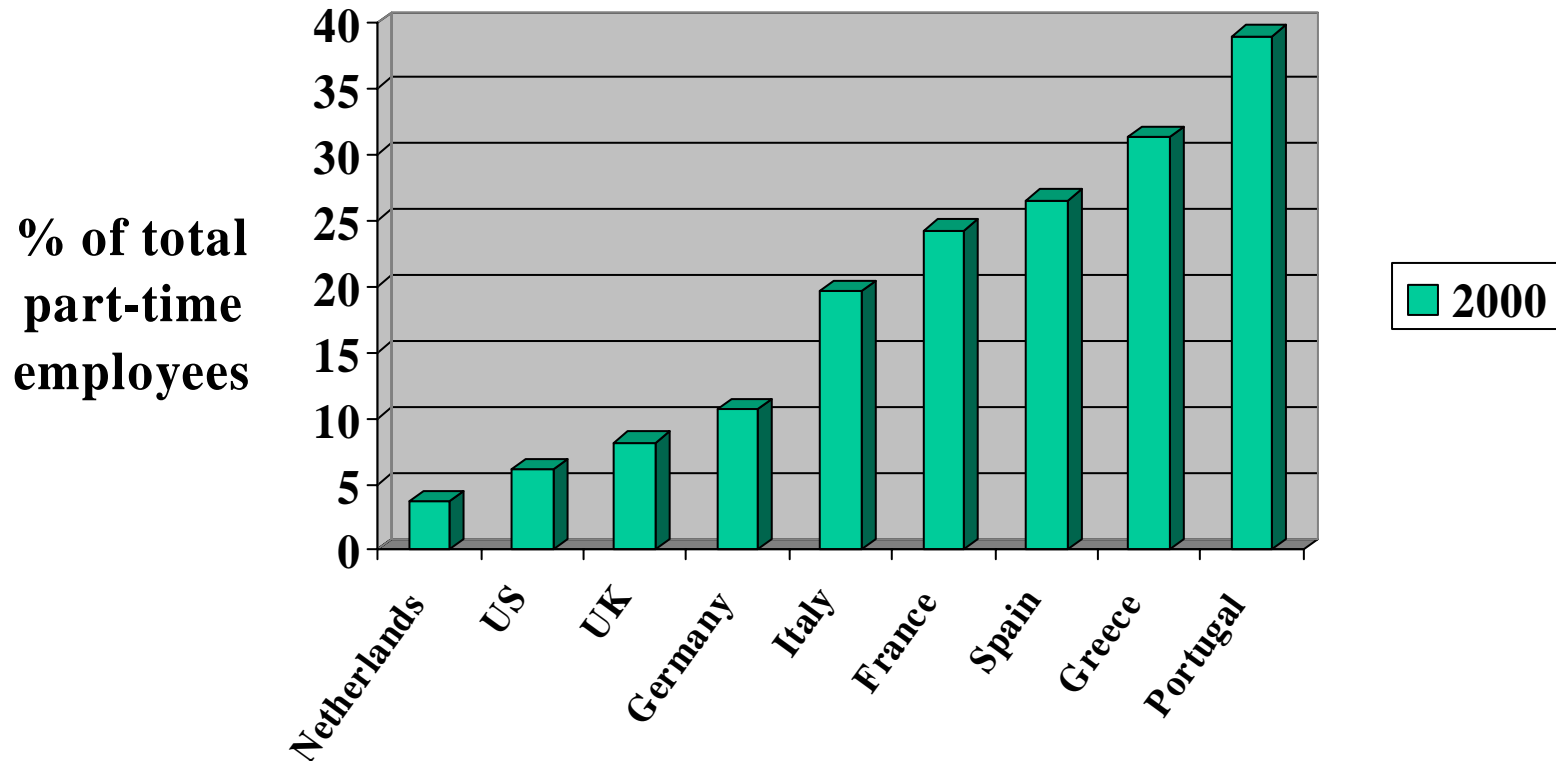
Working Hour Surpluses

Excessive Hours of Work (49+) in Selected Industrialized Countries



Working Hour Deficits

Involuntary Part-time Work in Selected Industrialized Countries



Preference 'Gaps' in Work Schedules

- **Work schedules perceived to be least compatible with personal commitments:**
 - **Regular long days or weekends**
 - **Some weekends plus long days**
 - **Evening and night work**
 - **Rotating shifts**
 - **Variable starting and finishing times**

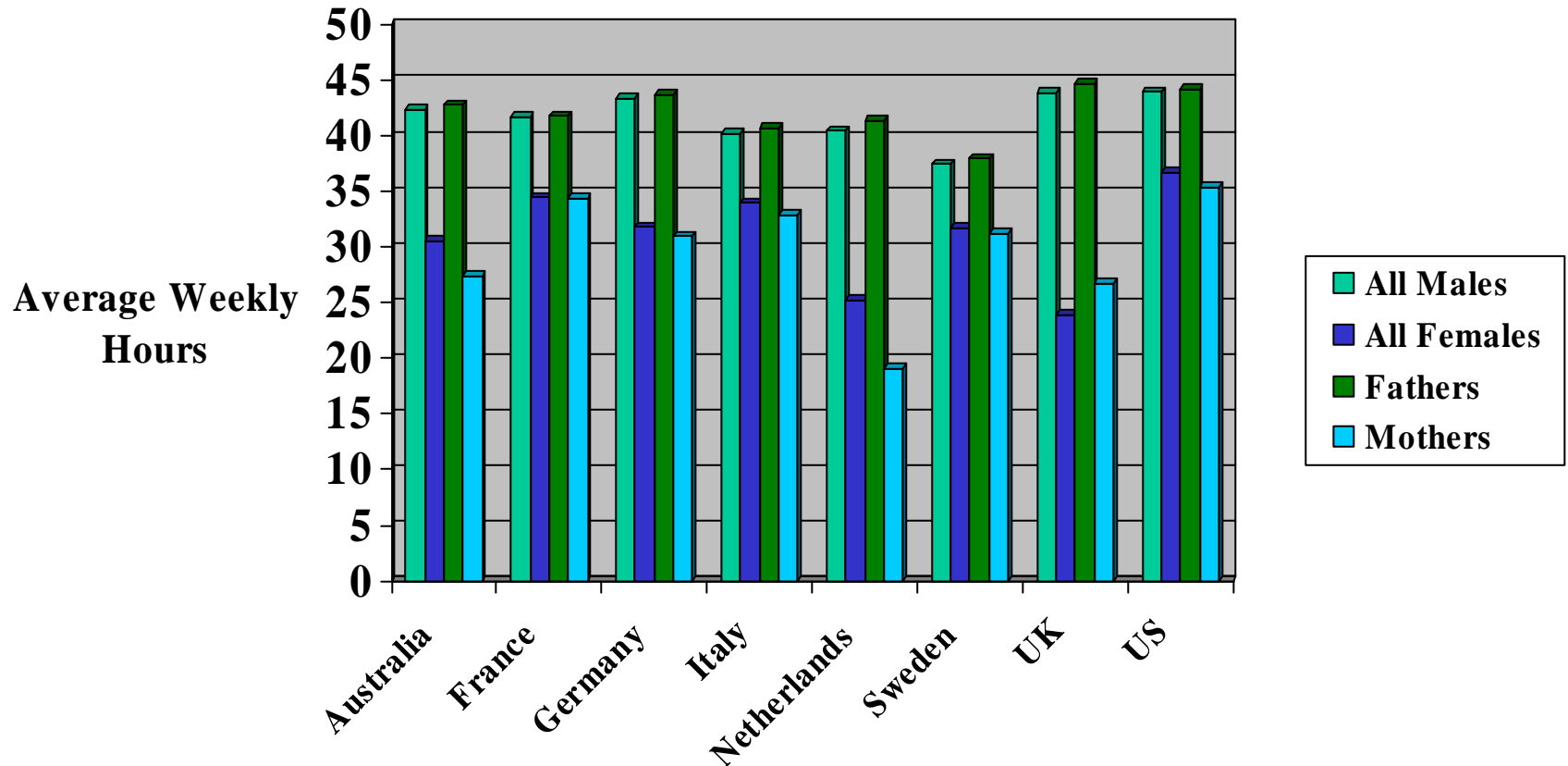
Household Differences

Average Weekly Working Hours of Singles and Couples (employees)

	Single Males	Married Males	Males Married-Single	Single Females	Married Females	Females Married-Single	Singles Men-Women	Couples Men-Women
Sweden	27.8	37.5	9.7	27.3	31.7	4.4	0.5	5.8
Italy	35.7	40.2	4.5	34.2	34.0	-0.2	1.5	6.2
Netherlands	36.5	40.5	4.0	30.7	25.2	-5.5	5.8	15.3
France	37.8	41.7	3.9	33.4	34.5	1.1	4.4	7.2
Austria	41.1	42.4	1.3	34.6	30.6	-4.0	6.5	11.8
UK	42.2	43.9	1.7	32.3	23.9	-8.4	9.9	20.0
US	42.5	44.0	1.5	38.7	36.7	-2.0	3.8	7.3
Germany	43.5	43.4	0.4	36.7	31.8	-4.9	6.3	11.6

Household Differences

Average Weekly Working Time of Couples (employees)



Gender Differences

% Distribution of Usual Weekly Hours by Occupation, Males, Old EU-15

	Under 35 Hours	35-39 Hours	40-47 Hours	48 Hours or More	Average
Managers/senior officials	8	16	31	45	48.7
Professionals	18	23	34	25	40.5
Associate Professionals	11	35	35	19	40.6
Clerks	9	46	36	9	38.7
Service and shop workers	15	25	34	26	41.8
Skilled agriculture/fishery	15	17	24	44	47.4
Craft and related	5	31	48	16	41.4
Operators and assemblers	7	31	45	17	41.3
Elementary occupations	19	29	41	11	36.9
All	11	29	39	21	41.6

Gender Differences

% Distribution of Usual Weekly Hours by Occupation, Females, Old EU-15

	Under 20 Hours	20-34 Hours	35-39 Hours	40-47 Hours	48 Hours or More	Average
Managers/senior officials	2	16	19	28	35	44.7
Professionals	14	32	25	20	9	32.3
Associate Professionals	11	25	33	24	7	33.7
Clerks	9	26	37	25	3	33.0
Service and shop workers	20	31	20	21	8	31.1
Skilled agriculture/fishery	5	23	11	30	31	42.9
Craft and related	10	18	30	33	9	35.5
Operators and assemblers	3	28	39	35	5	36.1
Elementary occupations	28	26	20	19	5	27.6
All	14	26	27	24	9	33.2

Gender Differences Working Time Preferences

- Employed men are more likely to be 'overemployed' and want to reduce hours**
- Employed women are more likely to be 'underemployed' and want to increase hours**
- Overall, men are more likely than women to prefer to adjust their working hours**

Overall Findings

Working Time 'Gaps'

General Conclusions of the report regarding working time gaps are:

- **Workers' preferences to adjust their hours are closely related to their *current hours of work***
- **Overall tendencies are:**
 - To prefer to *exit the extremes*—either very long or very short hours
 - To prefer to *move to the middle ground* of either 'substantial' part-time or short full-time hours

Implications for Policy

The Five Dimensions of 'Decent Working Time'

- **ILO's Overall goal: *Decent work for all***
 - **Promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity**
- **How can the goal of *decent work* be advanced in the area of *working time*?**

Implications for Policy

The Five Dimensions of 'Decent Working Time'

- **These five dimensions are:**
 - ✓ **Healthy working time**
 - ✓ **'Family-friendly' working time**
 - ✓ **Gender equality through working time**
 - ✓ **Productive working time**
 - ✓ **Choice and influence regarding working time**

Implications for Policy

Healthy working time

- **Working time should be structured in ways that promote health and safety**
- ***Underlying principle:* unhealthy working time should not be used as a tool to improve company profitability**
- **A traditional concern, but remains essential today**

Implications for Policy

Healthy working time

- **Policies that are needed include:**
 - **Legal limitations on excessively long hours of work (49+)—ILO Hours of Work Conventions 1 & 30**
 - **Legal provisions to ensure a minimum amount of daily/weekly rest—ILO Weekly Rest Conventions**
 - **Protective provisions for night workers in law and enterprise policies—ILO Night Work Convention**
 - **Enterprise policies to properly structure shift work**
 - **Establishment of an adequate minimum wage**
 - **New approaches for managers/professionals**

Implications for Policy

'Family-friendly' working time

- **Working time should be structured to allow workers to balance work & family**
 - **ILO Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention 156**
- **Workers needs differ depending on the size/composition of the household**
 - **e.g., the presence and age of children**

Implications for Policy

'Family-friendly' working time

- **Policies that are needed include:**
 - **Promoting collective reductions in full-time hours OR right to reduce working time for family reasons**
 - **Legal provisions to ensure proper compensation for overtime**
 - **National policies to promote working time arrangements that help workers balance work and family (e.g., shorter hours, flexi-time)**
 - **Enterprise policies to change workplace cultures that discourage use of these arrangements**

Implications for Policy

Gender equality through working time

- **Broad principle: Equality of opportunity and treatment between men and women in the world of work — elimination of discrimination**
- **Two important implications for working time policies:**
 - **Policies structured to advance gender equality**
 - **Policies designed to advance other objectives shouldn't have negative impact on gender equality**

Implications for Policy

Gender equality through working time

- **A 'portfolio' of policies is needed, including:**
 - **Legal limitations on excessively long hours of work**
 - **National measures to promote equal treatment of part-time and full-time workers—in line with ILO Part-Time Work Convention 175**
 - **Measures to broaden the availability of part-time work and promote 'substantial' part-time hours**
 - **Policies to promote transitions between full-time and part-time work for *both* men and women**
 - **Measures to involve men in care work (e.g., leave)**

Implications for Policy

Productive working time

- **Enterprise policies that promote 'work-life balance' can enhance enterprises' competitiveness (if properly structured)**
- **Potential business benefits include:**
 - **Increased productivity**
 - **Improvements in employee morale**
 - **Reduced absenteeism**
 - **Reduced staff turnover**

Implications for Policy

Productive working time

- **Enterprise policies that are needed include:**
 - **Reductions in excessively long hours of work (this can increase hourly productivity)**
 - **Measures that enable men *and* women to balance work and family (see above)**
 - **Policies to introduce flexi-time or 'time banking'**
 - **All measures should be introduced:**
 - **in combination with appropriate changes in work organization and production methods**
 - **in consultation with workers/representatives**

Implications for Policy

Choice and influence regarding working time

- **Principle: Working time should be structured in ways that allow workers to realize their working time needs and preferences**
 - To realize this principle, workers need to be able to *choose* or at least *influence* both the length and arrangement of their working hours
- **Worker influence over working time is both *collective* (framework) and *individual***

Implications for Policy

Choice and influence regarding working time

- **Policies needed are of two types:**
 - Policies to increase the range of available working time options
 - Policies that allow workers to directly influence the length and arrangement of working hours
- **Specific policy measures could include:**
 - A legal 'right to refuse' to work on a particular day or even a 'right to influence' working hours
 - Enterprise measures such as flexi-time and time banking schemes (see above)

Conclusion

- There are substantial 'gaps' between workers' actual and preferred hours of work
- This report proposes policies to both close these gaps and expand the range of feasible options
- 'Finding the balance' between workers' needs and preferences and enterprises' requirements = *'Decent working time'*