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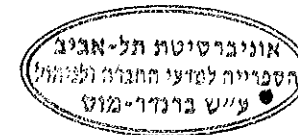
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22 Preferred working hours

Variations across time and space

Noah Lewin-Epstein, Lior Kadish and Anat Oren

Abstract

The chapter examines the preferences for working hours among men and women in twenty countries, at two points of time (1997 and 2005). The main question is what factors underlie these differences at the individual and the country level. To answer this question, data from the Work Orientation module are analyzed using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). Findings reveal that among full-time working men and women the proportion that would prefer to reduce work time is larger than the proportion that would like to increase it. In most cases this tendency is stronger among women. Women working part time, however, appear to comprise two distinct groups – those who lack opportunities for fuller employment, and those who are reluctantly employed and would prefer to work even less. At the country level, Sweden was found to have the lowest proportion of mismatches between actual and preferred work hours, while Israel and Bulgaria have among the highest proportions. Worker preferences are significantly related to perceived stress at work and perceived income and job security (women only). The observed effects of job-related stress seem to speak to the issue of the work–life balance. The findings also suggest that there is a strong socio-economic dimension underlying the preferences for work time. Among macro-level variables, only the level of economic development and unemployment rates (for men) are significantly related to work-time preferences. Lastly, time has a positive significant effect, indicating a decline in the preference for shorter (rather than longer) hours between 1997 and 2005.

Introduction

The debate on the work–life balance, now salient in many countries, has turned the spotlight on to the organization of work and working time. The organization of work time has several distinct dimensions. One dimension directly concerns the amount of working hours; that is, the availability of jobs that require working hours consistent with persons' preferences for other life activities and responsibilities. A second dimension has to do with scheduling – the ability to arrange working hours in a way that minimizes

interference with other responsibilities. A third dimension concerns short-term flexibility – the extent to which one can vary working hours at short notice owing to unpredictable changes in one's circumstances. And a fourth dimension is that of changing work status; that is, reducing work hours to zero (temporary exit from the labor force) or re-entering the labor force. Each of these dimensions has important implications for the organization of work and the ability to facilitate the work–life balance. In the present chapter we address the first of these dimensions and examine the mismatch between actual and preferred work hours, and its variation across countries and over time.

The case for studying workers' preferences

In most countries the long-term trend shows a decline of working hours as a result of arrangements negotiated between employers and employees as well as of state-imposed restrictions (OECD 1992). None the less, considerable variation exists among countries in the average time devoted to work. Studies conducted in industrialized countries have revealed clear differences between Western and Northern Europe, on the one hand, and the United States and Canada, on the other hand; showing a higher average in the latter than in the former (Stier and Lewin-Epstein 2003; Väisänen and Nätti 2002). Within Europe as well, specific countries have experienced different trends. For example, working hours in Great Britain and Sweden increased during the 1980s and early 1990s, whereas in Germany and in other North European countries they continued to drop (OECD 1998: 156). This suggests that cultural context and systemic differences play a significant role in determining the amount of time spent in labor-market activities.

From the household perspective, a major shift has occurred as growing numbers of women – married women in particular – have entered the labor force. Encompassing over half of all families of working age, the dual-earner family has replaced the “male breadwinner–female carer” family type as the modal category. Among dual-earner couples, there is a trend of increasing time devoted to work (Clarkberg 2000). Some argue that the decline in the number of children allows couples to spend more time at work. Yet the direction of the relationship between fertility and work time is not clear. An alternative explanation proposes that, in dual-earner families, spouses escape from the burden of household chores by spending more time in the workplace, which is often more rewarding (Hochschild 1997).

Both above explanations assume that working hours reflect decisions of workers, based on their preferences. From this perspective, macro trends of increase or decrease in working hours are an aggregate representation of shifts in individuals' orientations. Such an approach infers preferences from behaviors, with the implicit assumption that individual preferences can be met in an unproblematic manner by the labor market. In fact, actual hours of work are more appropriately viewed as the outcome of an interaction among three different elements: the time an individual would like to devote to work

(under given conditions); the hours of work demanded by the employer; and the institutional environment in which employee and employer preferences are “cleared” (Golden 1998).

Subjective information reflecting worker preferences for spending less or more time in market work is important because of its implications for job satisfaction, job changes, changes in employment status, and mobility between employers (Böheim and Taylor 2004). Euwals (2001), for instance, found that actual work hours of women were adjusted in a year-long panel study to their work-time preferences. The patterns were less clear among men, although here, too, those most dissatisfied with their work hours adjusted their actual behavior during the one-year follow up. Information on work preferences is also useful in detecting market rigidities. In a flexible labor market in which a variety of work arrangements meet the expectations of a diverse workforce we might expect that at any given time there will be only a small proportion of employees who would like to work longer or shorter hours than they actually do. Conversely, information on disparities between actual working time and preferences for working time suggests market rigidities.

Variation in the preference for work

In theorizing the sources of variation in work preferences, Bielinski *et al.* (2001) listed six factors that are likely to influence individual preferences. These include: (1) individual characteristics (e.g. current work situation, age, education); (2) household characteristics (e.g. marital status, children in the household, division of unpaid labor); (3) the socio-economic standing of the household (e.g. household income); (4) regulation of labor markets (e.g. legal constraints on hours of work, collective bargaining, trade union density); (5) work organization (e.g. structure of jobs in terms of full- and part-time work-time flexibility); and (6) current employment situation (e.g. unemployment rates, work demands, job security).

Gender and work-time preferences

While various household and labor-market attributes are likely to affect preferences for work, clearly gender should be singled out as the most crucial factor accounting for variation at the individual level. Although traditional norms are gradually giving way to more egalitarian ones, the organization of the workplace, as well as of the household, remains largely premised on a gender-based division of labor. For example, a recent report based on a large-scale survey of working conditions in Europe concluded that gender roles – women's position as secondary earners and holders of prime responsibility for family-related activities – are the major explanatory factors of women's part-time work (Tijdens 2002). Men are more likely than women, in all countries, to work long hours, whereas women are more likely to work fewer than twenty hours a week (OECD 1998). Hence, both the normative

expectations and the actual employment patterns of men and women require that their preferences regarding hours of work be studied separately. Indeed, the factors that affect work-time preferences may be quite different for the two gender groups (see Charles *et al.* 2001; Diprete and McManus 2000). Additionally, men's and women's preference for increasing or reducing work time may have different meaning as the former generally work longer hours on average than the latter.

Individual and household sources of variation

Aside from gender, a number of individual and household attributes may influence workers' preferences for work time. We focus here on the most prominent of these, including education, age, family situation, and the economic status of the household. We expect education to be negatively correlated with preferences for more work (that is, the more educated are less likely to prefer an increase in the time they spend in market activity). This is because higher education leads to higher earnings and economic security (see also Drolet and Morissette 1997), and creates more alternatives for spending their leisure time.

Preferences for more or less work are likely to vary with age as the latter is associated with both the individual and family life-cycle. In early adulthood individuals may prefer to trade work for leisure more than in middle age, and the same may be true for older individuals. Hence, the relationship is not expected to be monotonous. Older respondents are expected to prefer a reduction in working time.

We expect a negative correlation between family income and preferences for more working hours. This is because a higher standard of living generally affords a higher level of consumption. To the extent that such consumption requires time (as well as money), consumption activities will compete with working time (Gershuny and Fisher 2000). This effect is likely to be stronger among women than among men. Marital status is expected to affect differently the preferences for work of men and women. Being married is expected to increase market-time preferences of men and to affect negatively the preferences of women owing to the differences in their domestic responsibilities.

The work-life-balance hypothesis focuses much attention on the fact that work (production) and family (reproduction) are two separate spheres that require balancing (MacInnes 2005). We expect, therefore, that work-time preferences will be related to the family life-cycle. Two factors are particularly relevant in this respect: the labor-market situation of the spouse and the presence of young children in the household. The latter, of course, is more likely to affect women than men. It is typically argued that childcare responsibilities put greater demands on mothers, exacerbating the tension between family and work. At the same time, having young children imposes substantial expenses on parents, and consequently more working hours might be needed (primarily from men) to meet these expenses. Yet findings from the British

Social Survey revealed no substantial effect of family responsibility on work-time preferences (MacInnes 2005).

Employment status and job characteristics

Current employment situation has obvious relevance to one's attitude towards increasing or reducing time devoted to work. Yet the nature of the relationship between the two is not straightforward. Based on Schor (1991) and Jacobs and Gerson (2001), full-time workers (who may feel over-worked) are expected to have the lowest preferences for increasing working hours. The unemployed, on the other hand, are most likely to prefer "additional" work. As to part-time workers, it is not clear whether they would prefer longer or shorter hours of work. According to Jacobs and Gerson (2001), they will show higher preferences for working hours than full-time workers. According to Hakim's (1997, 2004) contention, however, part-time workers, especially women, are less committed to market work and thus will be less likely to prefer an increase in market time.

Aside from employment status, one would expect that characteristics of the job and the way one experiences work will affect workers' preferences for increasing or decreasing the time devoted to work. In particular, the work-family-balance literature suggests that reducing the amount of time devoted to work is a means of achieving greater balance when one experiences a heavy workload. Hence, persons with high scores on measures of workload or those with poor working conditions are more likely than others to express a preference for reducing the amount of time devoted to work. Job security is another aspect of the employment situation that is likely to affect work preferences (MacInnes 2005). Clarkberg and Moen (2001) refer to "all-or-nothing assumptions" that are often embedded in the employment relationship in American work culture. Accordingly, people put in more hours of work as a way to be seen as committed and productive. This is more likely to characterize workers who are less secure in their jobs than other workers.

Institutional constraints

We view individuals' preferences and decisions as embedded in specific social contexts. Observing the large cross-national differences in the amount of time devoted to work, Bell and Freeman (1995) pointed out that countries differ significantly in the general level of preferences for working time. This is because they differ in their socio-economic characteristics and with regard to culture and institutional arrangements that affect not only the patterns of employment but attitudes towards work as well. In a similar vein, Reynolds (2004) recently argued that governments, unions and cultural norms all play a role in creating mismatches between actual and preferred time devoted to work. Similar arguments at the macro level were advanced by Stier and Lewin-Epstein (2003), who concluded that both the level of

economic development, welfare policies and income inequality are related to the variation in average preferences for working hours across countries.

Among the most important characteristics at the macro level is the extent to which members of a society are dependent on the market for subsistence. This is related to the extent of de-commodification as well as to the country's level of development. It is reasonable to hypothesize that, in countries with extensive welfare transfers, people would be free to choose to allocate less of their time to work activity because their economic well-being is less dependent on their market wage. High rates of income tax, high wages, and low wage inequality may affect workers' preferences in a similar direction (Bell and Freeman 1995). On the other hand, we might expect that a relatively low standard of living (or low levels of GNP per capita), high unemployment rates, and low levels of de-commodification will increase the demand for long working hours (Reynolds 2004; Stewart and Swaffield 1997). Thus, preference for working hours will differ, on average, in countries that vary along these dimensions.

Another point for consideration is the extent to which work preferences are changing over time. As noted earlier, the study of actual working hours reveals a decline in some countries whereas in others there appears to be an increase in the amount of time devoted to work. Yet, as Clarkberg and Moen (2001) concluded for the United States, work arrangements have remained structured along lines that do not meet changing preferences of workers. Hence direct measurement of worker preferences may provide a more effective and reliable measure of the extent to which changing expectations of workers are being met by the changing employment arrangements. A similar conclusion might be derived from research on the development of part-time work and precarious employment arrangements (Tilly 1991). Rather than providing the working population with work arrangements that meet their diverse preferences, changing job structures primarily serve employers' quest for greater flexibility. Hence, one might expect an increase in the proportion of workers whose work-time preferences differ from what they actually do.

Data and variables

The current analysis utilizes data from the Work Orientation modules fielded in 1997 and in 2005.¹ A unified data file was created which includes respondents between the ages of 25 and 60² who were salaried workers at the time of the survey.³ To these data we added information at the country level that was collected from several sources.

Preference for working time is measured by the general question that was posed to all respondents: "Would you like to spend more time in a paid job?" The response categories ranged from "Much more time" (1) to "Much less time" (5).⁴ The values were transformed into a scale ranging from -2 to 2. For the descriptive analysis, the distribution was divided into three components: preference for devoting more time to market work (responses 1 and

2); preference for no change (response 3); and preference for devoting less time to market work (responses 4 and 5).

Several types of explanatory variables are included in the analysis. The first group consists of work-related factors. These are (1) current employment status (full-time = 1, part-time = 0); (2) subjective perception of income level; (3) subjective perception of job security. The last two variables are measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1- *strongly agree* (indicating positive perception) to 5- *strongly disagree* (negative perception); (4) job-related stress calculated as the mean score of four items and ranging from 1- *always* - (high stress) to 5- *never* - (low stress). The four items constitute one factor and have rather high scalability properties with a score of Cronbach alpha ranging from 0.519 in Hungary to 0.686 in Spain. A second set of variables consists of family attributes. These include (1) whether children are present in the household (yes = 1, no = 0);⁵ (2) employment status of spouse (whether the respondent has no spouse, his/her spouse is working or he/she is not working); (3) age of respondent (three age groups are distinguished: 25-40, 41-50, 51-60). A third group of variables captures respondents' positions in the stratification system. These include (1) respondent's education measured as years of schooling; (2) household income. In order to achieve comparability and overcome the differences in the unit of measurement, we calculated each respondent's family income as a percentage of the highest income reported in the country-specific sample.⁶

The last group of variables consists of macro-level country characteristics. At this level we introduce: measures of economic development and inequality (GDP per capita, Gini coefficient⁷); characteristics of the labor force (percentage of unemployed, percentage of union members⁸); de-commodification (level of social expenditure as a percentage of GDP⁹); and a measure of the country's level of orientation to work. The last variable was derived from the ISSP files of both years, based on the country's mean response to the statement "I would enjoy having a paid job even if I did not need the money". After reversing the order, responses ranged from 1- *strongly disagree* to 5- *strongly agree*.

Owing to the well-documented disparity in the average amount of time women and men devote to work, and the significant differences in their household responsibilities, all analyses are conducted separately for men and women. The underlying assumption is that the time preferences of men and women are affected by different factors owing to their distinct market prospects and divergent domestic responsibilities.

Findings

Preferences for working time

We start out with a brief description of the distribution of preferences for working time. Figure 22.1 provides a graphic summary for men, across twenty

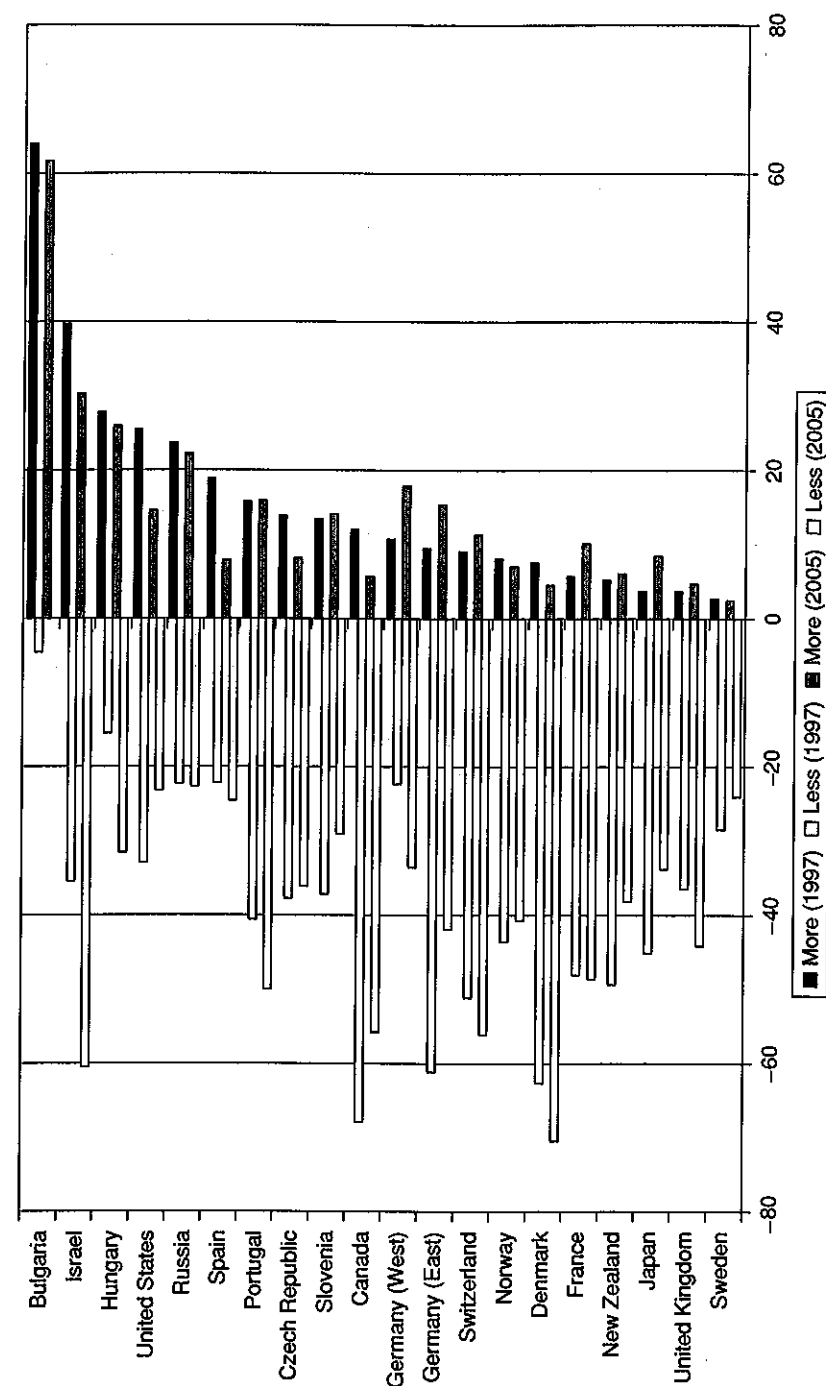


Figure 22.1. Time Preferences of Men (Full-Time Workers)

countries, in 1997 and 2005 (there are actually nineteen countries, but data for Germany are reported separately for East and West).¹⁰ Figures 22.2 and 22.3 provide similar summaries for women working full time and part time respectively. In Figure 22.1 we note that a considerably higher proportion of men would prefer to work less time as opposed to devoting more time to work. In most countries less than 20 percent of the men already working full time said they would prefer to work more. The overall pattern for women working full time (Figure 22.2) appears to be quite similar. As a general pattern, we find that among men, and full-time working women, the proportion of those who would prefer to work less is higher than the proportion of those who want to work more. Furthermore, in most cases the proportion of women working full time who would like to reduce their workload is larger than that of men. Looking at the combined preferences for working less and working more, we find that Sweden has the lowest proportion of either men or women who would like to change their current situation. Israel (in the case of men) and Bulgaria (especially as regards women) have among the highest proportions of workers dissatisfied with their work-time situation.

Turning now to women working part time (Figure 22.3), we find that many of them would like to change their situation. In many countries a substantial portion would like to increase the amount of time they spend working (cf. Bulgaria and Hungary in 2005). This suggests that many of the part-time workers engage in such jobs from lack of choice. At the same time, many women who work part time would prefer to work even less (averaging around 20 percent across countries). For these women, little work or possibly no market job at all may be a preferred state, albeit one that may be untenable for economic reasons. While we find in general a preference of many women to reduce the time spent at work, among part-time women there seems to be a bi-modal distribution.

All figures illustrate the large variation across countries. This is particularly true with regard to the preference for working more. In all figures, Bulgaria stands out, with the highest proportions of workers who would prefer to devote more time to work. It is followed by Hungary, Mediterranean countries (such as Israel and Portugal) and Germany. The proportion preferring to devote more time to paid work is generally lowest in highly developed countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain, France and Norway.

Lastly we address changes that took place between 1997 and 2005. In most countries, the proportion of full-time workers who prefer to spend more time at work has decreased, albeit slightly, and it was lower in 2005 than it was in 1997 (Figures 22.1 and 22.2). Among women working part time (Figure 22.3), the picture is not uniform: in some countries the proportion of those preferring to increase their time at work has decreased over the years (New Zealand, Portugal, Canada, Spain, Russia, France, Switzerland, Sweden and Great Britain), while in others the proportion of those preferring to increase their time at work has grown (Hungary, Bulgaria, East Germany, Norway, West Germany, the Czech Republic and Slovenia).

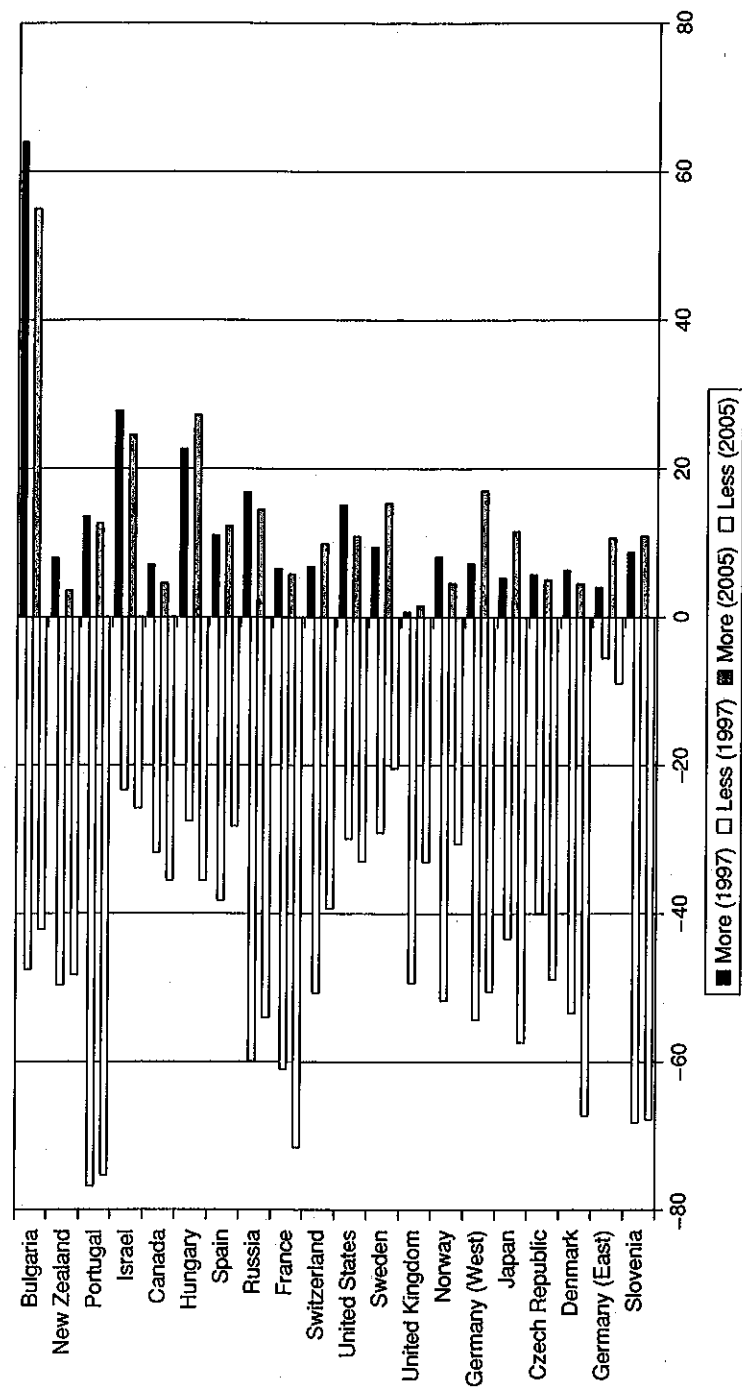


Figure 22.2. Time Preferences of Women (Full-Time Workers)

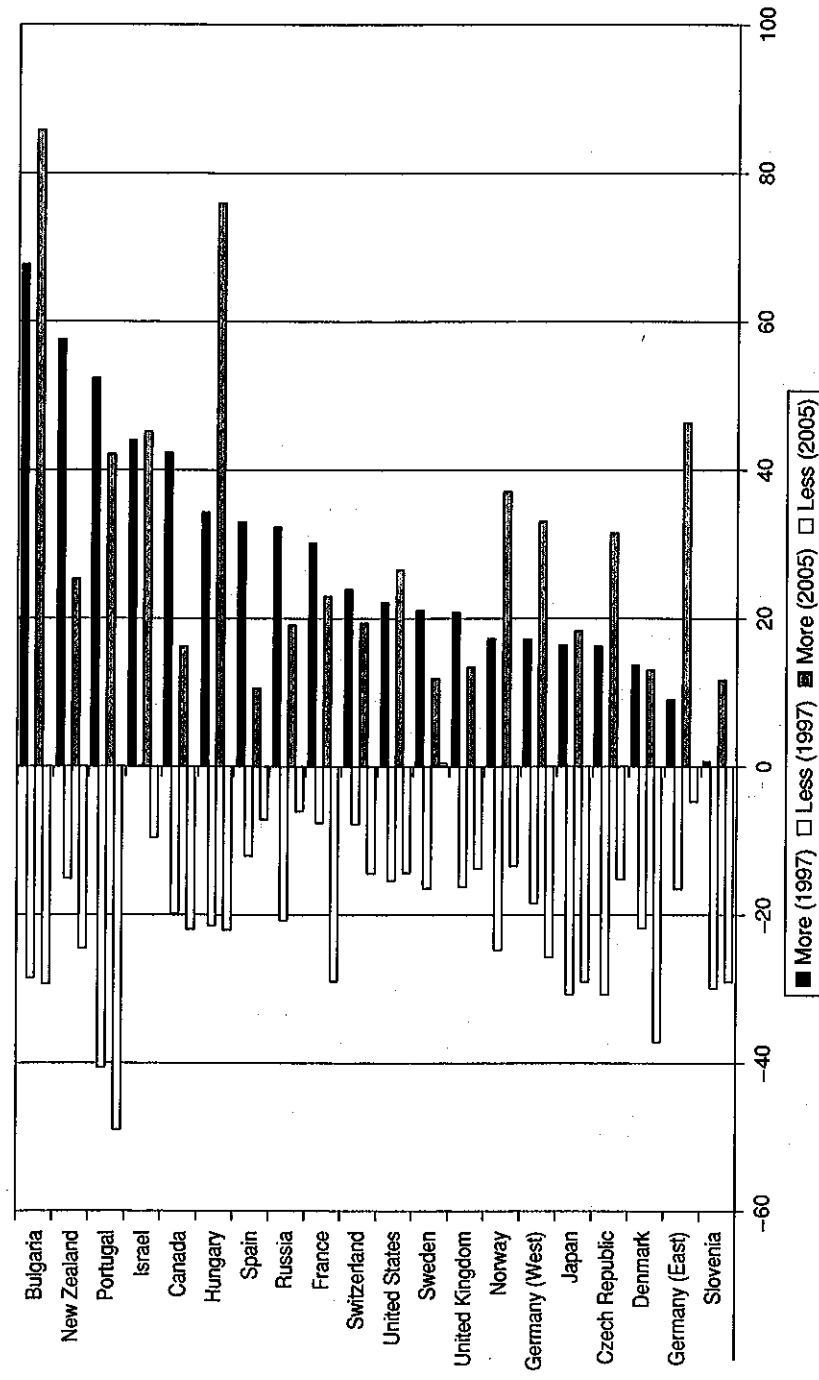


Figure 22.3. Time Preferences of Women (Part-Time Workers)

Clearly, these descriptive summaries of the patterns raise more questions than they resolve. In particular, to what extent do observed patterns reflect different population compositions? Are these differences associated with country-level characteristics? And has there been a change over time in work preferences? To answer these questions, we employ multivariate techniques, as will be described in the following section.

Multivariate analysis

Since our aim is to evaluate individuals' preferences for work across countries and time, we employ a multivariate technique that uses multilevel estimation techniques. We treat individuals as embedded within social contexts defined by country and by time. By partitioning the variance in work preferences into within and between (country and time) components, it is possible to evaluate whether there is systematic variation in the relationships between work preferences and attributes of individuals and their employment characteristics across countries, the extent to which there are systematic differences across countries, and whether the preferences have changed over time.

As described earlier, data are available for twenty countries at two points of time (1997 and 2005). Hence, there are forty higher-level units of analyses in which individuals are embedded. For each country attribute, we have data for the two different time points, and we include a dummy variable to distinguish the two. The interaction between survey year and job attribute variables at the individual level further permits an evaluation of changes over time net of other characteristics of individuals. Preliminary investigation revealed that the between-units (contexts) variance accounted for 18 percent of the total variance in the dependent variable in the case of men and 15 percent in the case of women.

A number of different models were investigated. We present here only the final models estimated separately for men and for women. The descriptive statistics for the variables included in the models are presented in Table 22.1 and will not be discussed in detail. The estimated coefficients for the HLM models are presented in Table 22.2. Two models are presented for each of the gender groups. The first model includes variables for which the coverage was fairly complete (all countries except Hungary). Unfortunately, several countries did not provide adequate information on whether there were children in the household and on total household income in either one or both time points. A second model was therefore estimated for thirty-three country-time units for which complete data were available.

Turning first to model 1 for men, we find that the only work-related factor that is significantly associated with work-time preferences is stress emanating from one's workload. Across countries and survey years, the coefficient is positive. Since low values on this measure indicate higher stress, the interpretation of the coefficient is that the more one feels stress at work the higher the preference for reducing market work. Two socio-demographic attributes

Table 22.1. Means (SD) of variables included in the analyses, by year and gender

Variable	1997		2005	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Work-time preference (-2 = much less time, 2 = much more time)	-0.24 (0.95)	-0.24 (0.93)	-0.29 (0.93)	-0.27 (0.93)
Employment status (0 = Part-time, 1 = Full-time)	0.96 (0.20)	0.73 (0.44)	0.96 (0.21)	0.76 (0.43)
Education years ¹	12.39 (3.41)	12.49 (3.3)	12.92 (3.55)	13.09 (3.48)
Age	40.71 (9.70)	40.27 (9.40)	42.19 (9.92)	41.90 (9.70)
Family income ²	45.34 (24.64)	43.16 (25.03)	46.47 (23.97)	43.29 (23.87)
Employment status of spouse				
Spouse is working	0.43 (0.50)	0.41 (0.49)	0.44 (0.50)	0.42 (0.49)
Spouse is not working (Compared to no spouse)	0.26 (0.44)	0.22 (0.41)	0.24 (0.43)	0.22 (0.42)
Children (0 = No children at home, 1 = Children at home)	0.39 (0.49)	0.38 (0.49)	0.37 (0.48)	0.35 (0.48)
Job related stress (1 = high, 5 = low)	3.15 (0.75)	3.33 (0.73)	3.14 (0.77)	3.33 (0.74)
Perceived job security (1 = high, 5 = low)	2.44 (1.17)	2.36 (1.19)	2.37 (1.14)	2.33 (1.15)
Perception of income (1 = high, 5 = low)	3.23 (1.07)	3.58 (1.04)	3.13 (1.10)	3.49 (1.07)
N (maximum cases)	5628	5358	5210	5748
GDP per capita (in dollars)	20,085.20	7250.19	27,813.85	8780.37
Unemployment rates	8.31	4.05	7.05	2.35
N			20	

¹ Values exceeding 25 were recoded as 25 years.

² As a percentage of each country's highest income.

Table 22.2. Individual- and country-level effects on preferences for market time – men and women aged 25 to 60 (standard error)

Variables	Men		Women	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Employment status				
Perception of income level	0.016 (0.015)	-0.015 (0.016)	-0.481* (0.038)	-0.456* (0.043)
Perception of job security	-0.010 (0.009)	-0.012 (0.010)	0.020** (0.009)	-0.029* (0.010)
Job related stress	0.061* (0.015)	0.078* (0.020)	0.062* (0.016)	0.016 (0.009)
Children at home		0.053** (0.020)		0.049** (0.018)
Employment status of spouse				0.011 (0.022)
Spouse is working	-0.020 (0.020)	-0.039 (0.024)	-0.001 (0.016)	-0.005 (0.021)
Spouse is not working	-0.006 (0.025)	-0.013 (0.024)	-0.006 (0.023)	-0.015 (0.021)
Age				
Age 25–40	0.067** (0.025)	0.047 (0.030)	0.015 (0.020)	-0.007 (0.021)
Age 51–60	-0.009 (0.024)	-0.011 (0.026)	-0.014 (0.021)	-0.036 (0.023)
Education	-0.021* (0.004)	-0.012* (0.004)	-0.019* (0.004)	-0.012* (0.004)
Family income		-0.005 (0.000)*		-0.004* (0.001)
Country-level intercept	-0.636* (0.078)	0.330* (0.078)	-0.218** (0.084)	0.111 (0.099)
GDP ¹	-0.035* (0.006)	-0.030* (0.006)	-0.028* (0.005)	-0.022* (0.005)
Unemployment	0.019** (0.009)	0.018** (0.007)	0.005 (0.010)	0.013 (0.010)
Year	0.330* (0.081)	0.321* (0.094)	0.243* (0.069)	0.217* (0.075)
Random component	0.308* (0.095)	0.299* (0.089)	0.424* (0.180)	0.432* (0.187)
Number of cases	9575	7088	9422	6922
Number of countries-years	38	33	38	33

* p < 0.01

** p < 0.05

¹ In the multivariate analysis, GDP was divided by 1,000.

Notes: (a) Data is missing for current employment status of spouse for Hungary in 1997, children for Israel, Slovenia, France and United Kingdom in 1997 and family income for Israel in 1997 and Slovenia in 2005. (b) Data for the macro-level variables were taken from the last year available before the two points of time relevant to our research or from these years exactly. (c) Macro-level characteristics for Germany were inserted to both East and West Germany.

are found to affect work-time preferences significantly. Highly educated working men are more likely to prefer a reduction in working hours than less educated men. Additionally, younger men (25–40) express stronger preference for working more compared to older workers.

Before turning to the country-level variables it is useful to compare the results in model 2 and model 1. Having children in the household is associated with preference for more market time among men, whereas higher family income tends to reduce the preference for working time. Importantly, when the presence of children is added (model 2) the coefficients for age are no longer statistically significant. We conclude that in this case younger age of men was a proxy for having (young) children in the household and it is the latter variable that directly affects men's preference for work.

Turning to country-level variables, we should note that among the variables we considered in our analysis (described in detail in the methods section) the level of economic development, measured by GDP per capita, was the single most consistent variable related to work-time preference. Most other variables had no significant effect, or the effect disappeared when GDP per capita was added to the model. The one exception is level of unemployment. As can be seen in both models, for men the higher the level of GDP, the greater the preference to work less. Not surprisingly, the country-specific unemployment rate has the opposite effect. Lastly we note that there is a positive significant effect for year, indicating that between 1997 and 2005 there was an average rise in the preference for working more. Since relevant individual and country variables are controlled for in the model, this appears to represent a true shift in preferences.

Turning to the models for women, models 3 and 4 reveal some similarities, as well as differences, with the models for men. Most importantly, there is a strong effect of employment status. Women working full time are more likely to report a preference for less market work whereas the reverse is true on average for women working part time. As with men, the coefficient for job-related stress is positive, indicating that the more stress a woman experiences at work the stronger her preference for reducing the time devoted to market work. In model 3 we also find a significant effect of perceived job security (the lower a woman's job security, the more time she would prefer to devote to work). This effect disappears, however, after controlling for household income. On the other hand, perceived income level which is not significant in model 3 becomes significant in model 4, once household income is taken into account. At a given level of family income, women who view their income as relatively high (low scores on the scale) report a preference for spending more time in market work. Looking at this relationship from the opposite end, the coefficient indicates that women who perceive their income as low (given a certain level of family income) prefer to work less than women with higher perceived income. This relationship may reflect the precarious employment situation in which many women find themselves as second earners. The pay is such that women would like to opt out if at all possible.

The more educated the woman, the lower her score on the work-preference variable (indicating preference for less market time). It is surprising that the presence of children at home has no effect. Possibly the measure is not sensitive enough. Unfortunately, the data provided by most countries are not sufficiently detailed to permit a closer investigation of this result by specifying the number of children and their ages. Turning to country factors, the results are mixed. We find the same effect of GDP per capita as we found for men, but there is no effect of unemployment level. Similarly to men, time has a positive effect. That is, after controlling for relevant country and individual attributes, the average score on the work preference measure is higher in 2005 than it was in 1997.

Although there appears to be a shift in preferences in the eight-year period towards working more, our hypotheses concerning an interaction between time and the job-related characteristics were not borne out. We expected that, with changing market structure and the growing prevalence of precarious employment relations, such factors as job security and job-related stress would have a stronger effect on work preference in 2005 than they did in 1997. Our tests of these hypotheses revealed no significant interactions, and these specifications were removed from the final models.

Conclusion

In this chapter we made use of ISSP data to examine one of the salient issues in the current study of work and labor markets; namely, the extent to which work arrangements concerning the amount of time devoted to work meet worker preferences. To the extent that labor markets are rigid in the arrangements they offer, one might expect a large portion of workers to be dissatisfied with their work situation; in which case they will indicate a preference for spending more, or less, time at work than they actually do.

Our analysis yielded considerable variation at the individual level as well as across countries. Differences between 1997 and 2005 were also evident. While the shift over time was not uniform across all countries, the general trend is one of higher scores in 2005 than in 1997. This does not mean that people want to work more. Indeed, the figures we presented indicate that a higher proportion of full-time workers (whether men or women) prefer to reduce the amount of time spent working rather than increasing it. Yet this tendency was less pronounced in 2005. In view of these figures on work-time preferences, the periodic assessments that foretell the coming of a leisure society seem premature. Clearly, in some countries, particularly the richer, more economically developed countries, there is a tendency to "scale-down" work activities. Yet in many cases (e.g. men in Great Britain and Portugal, women in New Zealand, Japan and the former East Germany) fewer workers reported a preference for working less in 2005 than was the case in 1997.

Aside from level of development, the country's level of unemployment was the only country factor that affected reported preferences (in the case of men

but not of women). This was contrary to our expectations. We had hypothesized that several context characteristics should be relevant to workers' preferences. These included the level of economic inequality, the extent of decommodification and the level of unionization. Surprisingly, none of these variables had a significant effect. Possibly, preferences tend to be embedded less in structure and more in individualized circumstances. In this regard two individual-level factors exhibited the most consistent relationship to work-time preferences. These were education level and the extent to which work is perceived as a stressful experience. To this we may add family income as well. So there appears to be a strong socio-economic dimension underlying these relationships. On average, higher-status workers are less likely to report a preference for more work. In part this may reflect the already high levels of time spent at work (see Jacobs and Gerson 2001) and partly this may result from the fact that higher earnings may afford them more attractive alternatives.

Among full-time workers, women expressed a stronger preference than men for reducing their working time, and these preferences were related to a larger array of job characteristics. Preferences of women, but not of men, were related to their perceived job security and income.

As a final point, it is noteworthy that the nature of work, and especially job-related exhaustion and stress, was systematically related to work preference among women and men alike. This seems to speak to the issue of work-life balance as people who experience job-related stress seek to achieve a new balance and exhibit a stronger preference to reduce work activity. In future work this dimension may be further investigated by looking more at the extent to which work and family impinge on each other and the solutions respondents seek to embrace.

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Notes

- 1 Twenty-seven datasets were archived in 1997 including separate datasets for East and West Germany and separate datasets for the Jewish and Arab populations of Israel. In 2005 data are available from thirty-two countries (including East and West Germany). Our analysis is limited, however, to twenty countries that fielded the survey in both time points. The countries are: Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany (East and West), France, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Israel (data were unified for both Jews and Arabs), New Zealand, Japan, Russia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovenia. Cyprus and the Philippines were excluded owing to missing information on important variables. The final sample included 22,075 men and women.

- 2 The age of the population studied was limited to afford greater comparability across countries. Owing to country differences in age structure and the likelihood of people in their early twenties to still be in school, the age of 25 was chosen as the lower age limit. Large differences also exist in retirement policies between men and women and across countries. In order to capture population that is still mostly active in the labor force, the upper age limit was placed at 60.
- 3 The issue under study is especially relevant for employed persons. In order to focus the analysis, self-employed persons, family workers and non-working individuals were not included.
- 4 For the present purposes, this question was preferred over a second item which asked whether respondents would like to work more and earn more money or would like to work fewer hours and earn less money. The item chosen is more general, and applies to salaried workers and wage workers equally. It is also less strongly linked to economic need and thus provides a purer measure of one's attitude towards work. For additional discussion of this matter, see Reynolds (2004).
- 5 Unfortunately, specific numbers and ages of children are not available.
- 6 For a discussion of this procedure, see Stier and Lewin-Epstein (2003).
- 7 Data for GDP per capita (World Bank estimates) are taken from the UNdata database of the United Nations Statistics Division. Data for Gini Index are taken from World Development Indicators 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2007 (World Bank) and the 2008 World Factbook (Central Intelligence Agency) and the Social Report 2007 of the Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand, and the Eurostat database of the European Communities Statistical Office.
- 8 Data for unemployment rates are taken from the Labour Statistics Database of the International Labour Organization. Data for union members' rates are taken from the OECD.Stat Extracts database of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and World Labour Report 1997-8: Industrial Relations, Democracy and Social Stability (International Labour Organization) and Unpacking Union Density: Union Membership and Coverage in the Transformation of the Israeli IR System (Cohen *et al.* 2003).
- 9 Data for social expenditure as percentage of GDP are taken from the Eurostat database of the European Communities Statistical Office and the OECD.Stat Extracts database of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and OECD Factbook 2008: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) and World Labour Report 2000: Income Security and Social Protection in a Changing World (International Labour Organization).
- 10 Relatively few men work part time, and often these are selective populations such as older men, or men with disabilities. Hence our analysis is restricted to men working full time.

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23 Where's a great place to work

A global analysis from the perspective of a labor-exporting country

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Abstract

Surveys of attitudes and opinions towards work of people working in more developed countries, which are net importers of labor, are of great relevance to the less developed countries, which are the net suppliers of labor to overseas markets. One of the major net suppliers of labor is the Philippines; it has deployed millions of workers to dozens of countries abroad in the past four decades.

The objective of this chapter is to compare a number of ISSP countries as potential work destinations for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). First of all, it uses the ISSP surveys on Work Orientations to examine the working-life dimensions of (a) job satisfaction and working hours per week, (b) felt deficiencies in working life, (c) difficulties found in present jobs, (d) willingness to make sacrifices for employers, (e) social relations at work, (f) flexibilities in job time and organization, and (g) several other non-income attributes of jobs. It compares Philippine and overseas standards along these dimensions in order to obtain an illustrative ranking of selected ISSP countries as attractive workplaces for OFWs. Second, the chapter uses the ISSP surveys on National Identity to establish the relative receptivity of potential host countries to immigrants. The chapter does not make any attempt to compare the host countries in terms of pay scales available to immigrant workers, since such data are not part of the ISSP modules.

The chapter focuses on the following twenty-one ISSP countries as potential workplaces: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Flanders, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan and the United States. Filipino workers are, in fact, currently being deployed to every one of these countries.