

The growing diversity of work schedules

While the 40-hour, 5-day workweek remains the schedule of choice for most employers and workers, a recent study shows evidence of the emergence of new forms of extended and compressed work schemes

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During any given week, the composition of the active segment of the work force undergoes many changes. Each industry and occupation has its own cycle of activity and draws on a somewhat different labor pool. Most production occurs Monday through Friday (or Saturday), frequently with the aid of evening and night shifts on those days. However, some economic activities, such as continuous manufacturing processes, agriculture, transportation and communications, health and certain other services, and retail sales, extend beyond the Monday to Friday schedule. In fact, these activities predominate on Saturday and Sunday. Each demographic group establishes itself within this variable labor market according to the types of jobs its members can obtain and the work schedules they are able to accommodate in their personal lives.

This article, based on the May 1985 Current Population Survey (CPS) supplement, examines several of the work schemes adopted by U.S. workers on their principal jobs. The schedules discussed include the "standard workweek" (that is, 40 hours in 5 days); compressed and extended schedules; part-time, full-time, and long hours schemes; and variations in the number of days worked per week, and in the choice of specific days worked. Where possible, patterns observed in May 1985 are compared with those ob-

served previously to judge the nature and pace of change. The CPS surveys of May 1973 and May 1979 are used in this comparison to minimize distortions due to business cycle fluctuations.

The 'standard workweek'

It has been estimated that at the turn of the century the average worker spent about 53 hours per week on the job.¹ The passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA) established a standard workweek of 40 hours' duration for nonsupervisory employees of firms engaged in interstate commerce.² Over the ensuing years, concern about workers' health led to many Federal and State statutes and union contracts which stipulated a second standard: the 8-hour day. Under these provisions, many persons were guaranteed overtime pay for hours worked in excess of this daily standard. The logical outgrowth of these regulations was a third implicit standard, the 5-day workweek.

Persons who were teenagers when the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed had reached retirement age by 1985. In their lifetimes, the coverage of the act has been extended to nearly 60 percent of all wage and salary workers,³ and has become not only a matter of law, but a social norm. More than half of all nonfarm wage and salary workers and roughly two-thirds of those working full time report that they work exactly 40 hours per week, proportions which have changed little since the CPS began monitoring usual hours worked on principal jobs in 1973. (See table 1.)

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Because the 40-hour week is so popular, both with employers and employees, most work schedule data are so strongly unimodal that it is difficult to recognize the changes which occur. Measures of central tendency such as means and medians are totally dominated by the standard schedule, and thus reveal little variation over time. Yet closer examination of the data will show that the work schedules of American workers have been changing, and are becoming increasingly diverse.

Catalysts in this redistribution include the stagnation of employment in manufacturing industries and the rapid growth of certain services and retail trade. Despite a 27-percent expansion in all wage and salary employment since May 1973, employment in manufacturing in May 1985—20.4 million—was no larger than it had been 12 years before. Not only was the number of manufacturing jobs more or less frozen, but the work schedules of those holding jobs had even contracted.

Some of this change is apparent in employers' reports of scheduled hours. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Area Wage Surveys indicate that the average workweek for full-time day-shift plant workers decreased by 0.8 hours between 1973 and 1985. Over the same period, the schedule of full-time office workers in the private sector rose by 0.2 hours, with the result that the workweek of these two large groups converged markedly.⁴ Whereas the average plant worker's 1973 workweek was scheduled to last 1.5 hours longer than that of his or her counterpart in the office, by 1985 the differential had narrowed to 0.5 hours.⁵

Despite the evident restructuring of plant schedules, CPS estimates of mean and median usual weekly hours for workers in all industries (38.4 and 40.4 respectively in 1985) have hardly changed since 1973. Similarly, the median

length of a full-time workweek has remained nearly fixed at 40.6 hours. For full-time workers, the mean rose slightly from 42.4 to 42.6 between 1973 and 1985, suggesting a slight increase in the number of hours routinely worked. In fact, this increase was due to a decline in the number of full-time workers reporting 35- through 39-hour schedules, rather than a rise in the numbers working 41 hours or more.

The median is cited to underscore the tremendous stability of these estimates. Whatever changes have occurred in the tails of the distribution, well over half of employed Americans work the standard schedule, and the remainder continue to be evenly spaced above and below that figure. It requires a fairly visible restructuring of the hours distribution to relocate the median. For this reason, the increase in median hours per week reported by part-time workers (from 20.2 in 1973 to 23.0 in 1985) is noteworthy.

Evidence of the increased diversity of work schedules can be seen in the following distributions for nonfarm wage and salary workers (including the incorporated self-employed):

| | 1973 | 1985 | Change, 1973-85 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------|
| Median usual hours | 40.5 | 40.4 | -.1 |
| Mean usual hours | 38.6 | 38.4 | -.2 |
| Total nonfarm wage and salary workers (in thousands) ⁶ . . . | 69,971 | 94,879 | 24,908 |
| Percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | - |
| 1-24 hours | 11.7 | 12.3 | .6 |
| 25-29 hours | 1.8 | 2.3 | .5 |
| 30-34 hours | 2.9 | 4.1 | 1.2 |
| 35-39 hours | 7.5 | 7.4 | -.1 |
| 40 hours | 55.2 | 53.8 | -1.4 |
| 41-48 hours | 10.2 | 8.3 | -1.9 |
| 49 or more hours | 10.7 | 11.7 | 1.0 |

During intervening recessionary periods (1974-75 and 1980), May supplements showed the hours distribution to be shifted temporarily downward. A drop in overtime opportunities led to a temporary resurgence of the 40-hour scheme. However, a comparison of schedules during these periods of relative prosperity reveals that both part-time and the very extended hours schedules have gained proportionately to the more conventional schemes.⁷

It is no surprise that two separate trends were in evidence among those working long hours. The class working 41 to 48 hours, which is dominated by precision production, craft, and repair workers and operators, fabricators, and laborers—the "blue-collar" occupations most affected by the decline in manufacturing—registered relative contraction over the study period. Meanwhile, the group working 49 hours or more, in which "white-collar" occupations such as managers and persons in professional, technical, sales, and administrative support positions outnumber the "blue-collar" group, registered a slight gain.

Usual days per week

The 5-day workweek is even more prevalent than is the 40-hour week. In 1985, nearly three-quarters of the work

Table 1. Prevalence of 40-hour, 5-day, and 40-hour/5-day workweeks among nonagricultural wage and salary workers, 1973, 1979, and 1985

| Work schedule and year | Proportion of— | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------|-------|------------------------------------|------|-------|
| | All nonagricultural workers | | | Full-time non-agricultural workers | | |
| | Total | Men | Women | Total | Men | Women |
| 40-hour week | | | | | | |
| 1973 | 55.3 | (1) | (1) | 66.1 | (1) | (1) |
| 1979 | 56.0 | 59.1 | 51.8 | 67.6 | 65.1 | 72.0 |
| 1985 | 53.7 | 56.8 | 50.1 | 66.2 | 63.6 | 70.1 |
| 5-day week | | | | | | |
| 1973 | 74.1 | (1) | (1) | 81.4 | (1) | (1) |
| 1979 | 75.4 | 75.4 | 75.4 | 83.5 | 79.4 | 90.4 |
| 1985 | 73.5 | 73.6 | 73.3 | 82.6 | 78.8 | 88.4 |
| 40-hour/5-day week | | | | | | |
| 1973 | 52.9 | (1) | (1) | 63.3 | (1) | (1) |
| 1979 | 53.3 | 56.1 | 49.6 | 64.4 | 61.7 | 69.0 |
| 1985 | 50.4 | 53.0 | 47.4 | 62.2 | 59.3 | 66.4 |

¹ Estimate not available.

NOTE: Estimates reflect data for wage and salary workers and the incorporated self-employed age 16 and over. Figures for May 1973 exclude private household workers.

force, and more than four-fifths of those employed full time reported schedules of 5 working days. (See table 1.) Both mean (4.9) and median (5.5) usual days per week have remained nearly constant since 1973.

Even so, the distribution of total workers by usual days of work corroborates the impression that schedules have become more diverse:

| | 1973 | 1985 | Change, 1973-85 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------|
| Total nonfarm wage and salary workers (in thousands) ^b . . . | 69,971 | 94,879 | 24,908 |
| Percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | — |
| 1-3 days | 6.5 | 7.8 | 1.3 |
| 4 or fewer days | 9.8 | 13.0 | 3.2 |
| 4.5 or fewer days | 10.3 | 13.9 | 3.6 |
| 5 days | 74.1 | 73.6 | -.5 |
| 5.5 or more days | 15.5 | 12.5 | 3.0 |
| 6 or more days | 11.5 | 9.7 | -1.8 |
| 7 days | 1.7 | 2.2 | .5 |

Observations made during recessions show the 5-day week to be particularly prevalent in unstable times. Yet, over the 12 years shown, both compressed and very extended workweeks made gains at the expense of the 5- to 6-day week.

Emergence of alternate schedules

The heavy clustering of reported schedules in standard patterns obscures our view of the unconventional schedules which have been gaining popularity in the workplace. One way to identify them is to determine which patterns have registered the highest rates of growth in recent years. Between May 1973 and May 1985, the number of nonfarm wage and salary workers for whom work schedules were tabulated rose by 36 percent. We have estimated the corresponding growth rates within various work schedule groupings, and from each subtracted this average rate of growth. The resulting figures (table 2) illustrate which schemes have gained in popularity (positive values) and which have lost (negative entries).

Several interesting patterns emerge from this computation. The growth of employment in the more conventional schemes has indeed been more sluggish than that in other schedules. For instance, the number of persons on a 40-hour/5-day week has lagged overall growth by 6 percentage points. Two other 5-day schemes (1- through 29-hour and 35- through 39-hour workweeks) have lagged even further behind.

Both the extended days and extended hours schemes registered net declines during this period, almost entirely due to the drop in the 41- through 48-hour/extended-week scheme. Between May 1973 and May 1985, the absolute number of workers registering this schedule dropped by more than a third.

Although this was a profound setback to the extended workweek (5½ days or more), lengthy workweeks appear to have gained some momentum among persons working 40 hours or less. The growing dispersion of work hours for

Table 2. Standardized percent change in the incidence of various weekly work schedules, May 1973 to May 1985

| Usual hours worked per week | Usual days worked per week | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|------------|--------|------------------|
| | Total | 1-3 days | 4-4.5 days | 5 days | More than 5 days |
| Total, 16 years and over ¹ | 0 | 28 | 80 | 1 | -27 |
| Part-time | | | | | |
| Total | 19 | 19 | 47 | 6 | 20 |
| 1 to 29 hours | 10 | 16 | 42 | -9 | 6 |
| 30 to 34 hours | 59 | 9 | 58 | 54 | 58 |
| Standard hours | | | | | |
| Total | -3 | (2) | 133 | -6 | 12 |
| 35 to 39 hours | -1 | (2) | 76 | -10 | 27 |
| 40 hours | -4 | (2) | 169 | -6 | 8 |
| Extended hours | | | | | |
| Total | -5 | 209 | 219 | 33 | -39 |
| 41 to 48 hours | -24 | (2) | 185 | 20 | -72 |
| 49 or more hours | 13 | (2) | 262 | 48 | -14 |

¹ The number of nonagricultural wage and salary workers reporting work schedules rose by 35.6 percent between May 1973 and May 1985. This figure has been subtracted from the observed growth rate for each cell so that negligible values signify growth in pace with the total, negative values a lag, and positive values relative expansion.

² Cell frequency is too small to warrant this computation.

NOTE: Estimates are for wage and salary workers and the incorporated self-employed age 16 and over. Figures for May 1973 exclude private household workers.

these individuals probably reflects the expansion of week-end employment in retail sales and services, both of which draw from pools of supplemental part-time help.

Among alternate schedules, the most familiar form is generally the "compressed workweek," normally defined as 40 hours' work completed in 4 to 4½ days. Employment in such schemes grew about 4.5 times as fast as did total employment during the 12 years preceding May 1985. But other forms of compression were also in evidence. For instance, those working long workweeks (41 hours or more) appeared increasingly likely to compress them into a span of 5 days—or even less—thereby reserving a block of time for other activities. There was even some evidence of a growth in "compressed part time," whereby persons working 30 to 34 hours did so in 3 days or less.

The small representation of most of these groups in the work force means that even rapid growth of these cells can have little impact on aggregate measures. It would probably take many years of accelerated growth for these schemes to become popular alternatives to those with which we are most familiar. Certain less dramatic changes (such as the rise in the 5-day/41-or-more-hour week—another "compressed long hours" scheme) are more easily spotted because they affect larger segments of today's work force.

When the interval is broken into phases before and after May 1979, similar computations show that three schedule groups have lagged throughout the full interval. In addition to the declining 41- through 48-hour extended week (5½ or more days) scheme, the two 5-day schemes mentioned earlier (light part time of 1 to 29 hours and light full time of 35 to 39 hours) have experienced contraction.

The incidence of the 40-hour/5-day workweek actually

kept pace with overall employment growth until 1979. The fact that it has not done so since that time is somewhat surprising, given the occurrence of two serious recessions in the early 1980's. The temporary effects of each must have been to force many overtime workers into this standard full-time pattern.

Since 1979, only one form of lengthy workweek has registered comparative gains: employment lasting 49 hours or more per week. Most of the gains noted have involved workers compressing these long hours into 5 or fewer days.

The conventional "compressed workweek" (full-time work completed in under 5 days) has been growing at an accelerated rate. While overall employment growth between 1979 and 1985 was 16 percent, this scheme grew more than four times as rapidly. The incidence of "dispersed" schedules, whereby relatively few hours of work occupy 5½ or more days per week, seems to have evolved since 1979.

Differences by sex

Labor analysts often discuss the convergence between male and female work patterns. Table 3, based on changes between May 1979 and May 1985, shows how this convergence is taking place. Standardized rates for men and women are juxtaposed to highlight similarities and contrasts.

The decline of the extended (more than 5-day) week is largely a male phenomenon. With the exception of the 41-through 48-hour variant, which has contracted for both sexes, there has been a growing concentration of women in extended workweek schemes.

The net drop in 41- through 48-hour schedules also has occurred largely among men. Although women, too, have been affected by the contraction of the 41- through 48-hour/5-day scheme, they seem to have more than offset its effects by compressing 41- through 48-hour schedules into 5 working days. Indeed, women appear to be pressing into long hour schemes, while men—who traditionally dominated those schemes—increasingly find themselves working compact and compressed schedules. It is difficult to determine how much of this shift has been voluntary, and how much the result of the changes in labor demand.

Both sexes report a declining concentration within standard schedules, and an increased likelihood of working 40 hours within 4 to 4½ days. Women seem to be moving up from light (1- through 29-hour) to more intense (30- through 34-hour) part-time schedules, and from light (35- through 39-hour) to more intense (41 or more hours) full-time schemes. At the same time, men are increasingly represented within the lighter hours schedules. There has been surprising growth in the number of men reporting part-time and light full-time schedules. The movement away from standard and extended workweeks to a compressed (4-through 4½-day) schedule is heavily dominated by men. Even for persons working long hours, this change effectively lightens the workweek by holding a block of time free

for other activities. Men also seem largely responsible for the emergence of the "compressed part-time" schedule, perhaps because of growth in the number of protective service jobs.

Mean hours per day

With more than half of all wage and salary workers and more than 60 percent of those working full time still reporting a 40-hour/5-day schedule, it is no surprise that the average workday is approximately 8 hours in length. However, as workers begin to compress their hours into fewer days, this variable should begin to show those effects. This change is most evident among part-time workers, where the length of the average workday has increased by a full hour (from 4.2 to 5.2 hours) since 1973.

In addition to compression, some of the change is attributable to distributional factors. The work force (including the part-time component) aged over the study period,

Table 3. Standardized percent change in the incidence of various weekly work schedules, by sex, May 1979 to May 1985

| Usual hours worked per week | Usual days worked per week | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------|------------|--------|------------------|
| | Total | 1-3 days | 4-4.5 days | 5 days | More than 5 days |
| Total | | | | | |
| Total ¹ | 0 | 10 | 36 | -1 | -3 |
| Men ² | 0 | 29 | 62 | -2 | -7 |
| Women ³ | 0 | -4 | 16 | -3 | 27 |
| Part-time | | | | | |
| 1 to 29 hours: | | | | | |
| Total | 5 | 3 | 14 | -4 | 59 |
| Men | 10 | 14 | 28 | -11 | 39 |
| Women | -2 | -7 | 4 | -6 | 82 |
| 30 to 34 hours: | | | | | |
| Total | 19 | 51 | 19 | 8 | 64 |
| Men | 27 | 109 | 25 | 15 | 36 |
| Women | 10 | 20 | 10 | 0 | 82 |
| Standard hours | | | | | |
| 35 to 39 hours: | | | | | |
| Total | 3 | (4) | 39 | -4 | 48 |
| Men | 20 | (4) | 80 | 6 | 107 |
| Women | -10 | (4) | 14 | -14 | 16 |
| 40 hours: | | | | | |
| Total | -4 | (4) | 67 | -6 | 1 |
| Men | -4 | (4) | 81 | -6 | -4 |
| Women | -4 | (4) | 46 | -5 | 15 |
| Extended hours | | | | | |
| 41 to 48 hours: | | | | | |
| Total | -5 | (4) | 121 | 10 | -35 |
| Men | -10 | (4) | 85 | 3 | -34 |
| Women | 26 | (4) | (4) | 43 | -19 |
| 49 or more hours: | | | | | |
| Total | 12 | 59 | 181 | 22 | 0 |
| Men | 10 | 53 | 178 | 21 | -1 |
| Women | 51 | (4) | (4) | 47 | 47 |

¹ Overall growth rate for the period May 1979 to May 1985 was 16.0 percent. This figure has been subtracted from the observed growth rate for each 1979-85 cell of the table to derive the standardized values shown. Thus, for example, the growth of schemes involving 40 hours of work in 4 to 4.5 days was about five times that of all nonagricultural wage and salary employment.

² Overall growth of male nonfarm payroll employment from May 1979 to May 1985 was 10.3 percent. This figure has been subtracted from the growth rate of male employment in each work schedule to derive the standardized values shown.

³ Overall growth of female nonfarm payroll employment from May 1979 to May 1985 was 23.5 percent. This figure has been subtracted from the growth rate of female employment in each work schedule to derive the standardized values shown.

⁴ Cell frequency is too small to justify computation.

with its members becoming more committed to labor force involvement. The strengthening of the labor force attachment of women also contributed to this upward movement.

Variations by class of worker

The category of workers we have been discussing to this point, denoted "wage and salary workers," includes those who are nominal employees of corporations which they own. While this classification is consistent with other data series published by the Bureau, it hinders the analysis of the work practices of persons who truly work for someone else as distinguished from those who work for themselves, even if their firms are incorporated and they are on the payroll. Whether or not the business is incorporated, its owner faces a different set of risks and responsibilities than does the typical wage and salary worker. Work schedules reflect this difference. For instance, although wage and salary workers average just 38 hours of work per week, the unincorporated self-employed report an average of about 43 hours, and the incorporated, more than 48. Wage and salary workers claim to work an average of 4.8 days per week, as compared with 5.2 for each of the self-employed groups (which are treated jointly below). Unpaid family workers helping in family businesses often maintain even more erratic schedules tied to periods of peak need. Table 4 illustrates differences between the average work schedules of these groups of workers by sex.

In the past, work schedule reports have devoted little attention to the self-employed and their unpaid family workers. It is relatively difficult for these individuals to summarize their "usual" work patterns by answering a few simple questions. Recognizing that the estimates for these groups may be less robust than for wage and salary workers, we still regard them as important enough to discuss. Each class of worker maintains its own "niche" in the total employment picture. The industries within which entrepreneurs find it easiest to become established (including agriculture, retail trade, and certain services) by their very nature demand long hours and extended workweeks. Certain types of businesses are largely or predominantly self-employed operations. Certain groups of workers (for example, white men) are particularly likely to open their own family businesses. Recognition of these patterns helps to explain why work schedules of these groups differ so dramatically from the norm.

It should be noted that men are twice as likely as women to report self-employment (with the associated longer hours and workweeks). White men are almost three times as likely as blacks to do so. Women are four times as likely as men to supply unpaid family services, but in the aggregate, women are also more likely to be employed for a wage or salary.

Men who are self-employed average more days and many more hours of work per week than do their counterparts who are wage and salary workers. For women, the difference is much less pronounced. Overall, the self-employed are four

Table 4. Incidence of selected work schedules, by class of worker and sex, May 1985

| Work schedules and sex | Class of worker | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Total employed | Wage and salary ¹ | Self-employed ² | Unpaid family workers |
| Total, 16 years and over (in thousands) | 106,878 | 94,280 | 12,107 | 491 |
| Percent of total employed | 100.0 | 88.2 | 11.3 | .5 |
| Average hours per week | 38.7 | 38.0 | 44.2 | 35.4 |
| Full-time | 43.3 | 42.3 | 51.0 | 48.7 |
| Part-time | 19.7 | 19.8 | 18.8 | 21.3 |
| Average days per week | 4.9 | 4.8 | 5.2 | 5.5 |
| Full-time | 5.1 | 5.1 | 5.1 | (3) |
| Part-time | 3.9 | 3.8 | 4.1 | 5.1 |
| Average hours per day | 7.9 | 7.8 | 48.4 | (4) |
| Proportion working: | | | | |
| Weekends | 29.3 | 26.1 | 53.5 | 52.3 |
| 6 to 7 days | 12.6 | 9.3 | 36.2 | 48.8 |
| Men, 16 years and over (in thousands) | 60,015 | 51,106 | 8,802 | 106 |
| Percent of employed men | 100.0 | 85.2 | 14.7 | .2 |
| Average hours per week | 41.6 | 40.6 | 47.2 | 36.6 |
| Full-time | 44.6 | 43.4 | 51.7 | 51.6 |
| Part-time | 19.1 | 19.1 | 19.1 | 22.8 |
| Average days per week | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.4 | 6.0 |
| Full-time | 5.2 | 5.1 | 5.1 | (3) |
| Part-time | 4.7 | 4.7 | 4.9 | 5.3 |
| Average hours per day | 8.3 | 8.2 | 48.8 | (4) |
| Proportion working: | | | | |
| Weekends | 32.2 | 27.9 | 56.7 | 74.5 |
| 6 to 7 days | 16.1 | 11.8 | 39.6 | 75.6 |
| Women, 16 years and over (in thousands) | 46,864 | 43,173 | 3,305 | 385 |
| Percent of employed women | 100.0 | 92.1 | 7.1 | .8 |
| Average hours per week | 35.0 | 34.9 | 36.0 | 35.1 |
| Full-time | 41.3 | 40.8 | 48.2 | 47.9 |
| Part-time | 20.0 | 20.2 | 18.5 | 20.8 |
| Average days per week | 4.7 | 4.7 | 4.9 | 5.3 |
| Full-time | 5.1 | 5.1 | 5.1 | (3) |
| Part-time | 7.4 | 7.4 | 47.1 | (4) |
| Average hours per day | 7.4 | 7.4 | 47.1 | (4) |
| Proportion working: | | | | |
| Weekends | 25.6 | 23.9 | 44.8 | 46.5 |
| 6 to 7 days | 8.0 | 6.2 | 37.2 | 41.4 |

¹ Excludes the incorporated self-employed.
² Includes both incorporated and unincorporated self-employed.
³ Not available.
⁴ Data are available only for the self-employed and unpaid family workers combined.

times as likely as wage and salary workers to average 6 or more days of work per week. The evidence suggests that—at least for men—they also work more hours per day.

Who works weekends?

The class-of-worker variable is particularly relevant to the discussion of specific days of work. The level and character of economic activity is quite different on weekends than during the week. It is even different on Sunday than on Saturday. During the week, about 20 percent of all workers hold primary jobs in manufacturing, and another 20 percent work in professional service jobs. On weekends, these industries account for about 10 percent and 14 percent of all primary jobs, respectively. Retail sales workers, who represent only about 17 percent of the weekday work force, account for more than 34 percent of the population active in their main job on weekends.

The self-employed (whether incorporated or not), and the unpaid working members of their families, often operate businesses which serve active weekend markets. They also bear a greater responsibility for the continued operation of their businesses than do individual wage and salary workers,

and their risks associated with taking time off are necessarily greater. Consequently, whereas fewer than 1 in 10 wage and salary workers maintain an extended (6- or 7-day) workweek, this is the usual schedule reported by more than 1 of every 3 self-employed persons and nearly half of all unpaid family workers.

Table 5 is a "snapshot" of the characteristics of persons who usually report to their primary job on various days of the week. (The categories are not mutually exclusive: some who work Monday to Friday are also included in weekend distributions, and so forth.) As the largest segment of the work force, wage and salary workers dominate each of the groups detailed in the table. However, their share drops from 88 percent during the week to 77 percent on Saturday and to 58 percent among those who work continuously.

On Saturday, the number of persons working at their primary job contracts to 28.9 million, about a quarter (27 percent) of its weekday size. Because fewer than 1 percent of those who work do so exclusively on weekends,

the composition of weekend employment tells us as much about who has taken a break as about who is reporting to work. On Saturday, the percentage of overall employment accounted for by prime-aged men holds steady. That of prime-aged women drops sharply, but the proportionate decline is offset by greater work effort among teens, young adults, and men age 65 and over. On Saturday, the representation of the self-employed and unpaid family workers is roughly twice what it is during the week. Of the wage and salary workers who report to work, a disproportionate share hold part-time jobs.

The primary work force contracts still further on Sunday, to 13.2 million—about an eighth of its weekday size. This is the day when prime-aged men are most likely to be taking a break from their main job. (We have no way of judging what share devote the day to secondary employment.) The group normally reporting to their main job on Sunday includes still larger shares of teens and young adults, more older men, and proportionately more prime-aged women. Although there is a slight drop in the activity of the self-employed (largely men), unpaid family workers (largely women, teens, and young adults) continue to be relatively active.

Of those who normally work at the same job 7 days per week, more than half are prime-aged men; 3 of 10 are women; and 4 of 10 are self-employed. Sixteen percent maintain extended part-time ("dispersed") schedules, mostly as wage and salary employees. The representation of blacks and Hispanics, which drops on weekends, is particularly low among those working 7-day weeks. Undoubtedly, one reason is the lower probability that they own or operate family businesses.

Work schedules by industry and occupation

We have already noted that the industrial composition of the work force varies during the week, and that the timing of labor demands within each industry affects the labor pool upon which it may draw. Table 6 summarizes, for major industries and occupational groupings, several of the work schedule features previously mentioned. Each category reflects a differing level of labor demand, both with regard to total hours and to scheduling within the week. For illustrative purposes, the groups have been ranked according to the mean number of hours their employees report working each week.

The association between hours requirements, days of work, and female participation in the industry or occupation is fairly strong. The more time the activity involves, the less attraction it seems to hold for women. Although the relationship to weekend work is less pronounced, a similar pattern is evident there as well.

Multiple jobholding

A separate discussion of multiple jobholding appears elsewhere in this issue, but it is worth taking a brief look at

Table 5. Employed persons who usually work on specific days of the week, by selected characteristics, May 1985

[In percent]

| Worker characteristic | Total | Persons who usually work— | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------|----------|--------|-----------------|
| | | Monday to Friday | Saturday | Sunday | 7 days per week |
| Total, 16 years and over (in thousands) ¹ | 106,878 | 106,343 | 28,949 | 13,246 | 4,666 |
| Sex and age | | | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 16 to 24 | 18.9 | 18.6 | 26.3 | 29.7 | 16.3 |
| 25 to 54 | 67.7 | 67.9 | 60.9 | 57.7 | 65.1 |
| 55 to 64 | 10.8 | 10.8 | 9.7 | 9.3 | 13.1 |
| 65 or more years | 2.6 | 2.6 | 3.1 | 3.3 | 5.5 |
| Men | 56.2 | 56.2 | 62.3 | 58.5 | 69.9 |
| 16 to 24 | 10.0 | 9.9 | 14.4 | 15.6 | 10.8 |
| 25 to 64 | 44.5 | 44.7 | 45.8 | 40.5 | 54.6 |
| 65 or more years | 1.6 | 1.6 | 2.1 | 2.4 | 4.5 |
| Women | 43.8 | 43.8 | 37.7 | 41.5 | 30.1 |
| 16 to 24 | 8.8 | 8.7 | 12.0 | 14.1 | 5.5 |
| 25 to 64 | 34.0 | 34.1 | 24.8 | 26.5 | 23.6 |
| 65 or more years | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | .9 | 1.0 |
| Class and work status | | | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Full-time | 80.4 | 80.7 | 74.6 | 69.7 | 83.8 |
| Part-time | 19.6 | 19.3 | 25.4 | 30.3 | 16.2 |
| Wage and salary workers ² | 88.2 | 88.2 | 77.2 | 81.7 | 58.0 |
| Full-time | 71.2 | 71.5 | 55.3 | 54.6 | 47.3 |
| Part-time | 17.0 | 16.6 | 22.0 | 27.2 | 10.7 |
| Self-employed workers ³ | 11.3 | 11.4 | 21.9 | 17.4 | 39.8 |
| Full-time | 8.9 | 9.0 | 18.8 | 14.6 | 35.0 |
| Part-time | 2.4 | 2.4 | 3.1 | 2.8 | 4.8 |
| Unpaid family workers | .5 | .4 | .9 | .9 | 2.2 |
| Full-time | .2 | .2 | .5 | .6 | 1.5 |
| Part-time | .2 | .2 | .4 | .3 | .7 |
| Race and Hispanic origin⁴ | | | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| White | 87.5 | 87.5 | 89.1 | 89.0 | 91.4 |
| Black | 9.7 | 9.8 | 8.1 | 8.3 | 6.2 |
| Hispanic origin | 6.1 | 6.1 | 5.7 | 5.6 | 4.9 |

¹ Data are not additive, as persons working on any or all weekdays may also work on weekends.

² Excludes the incorporated self-employed.

³ Includes both the incorporated and the unincorporated self-employed.

⁴ Detail will not add to 100 percent because Hispanics are included in both the white and black populations and because data for the "other races" group are not presented.

the effect of this practice on aggregate estimates of time spent at work.

The information in this article relates to the worker's primary job. For the small group of workers (5.4 percent) who held two or more jobs in the May 1985 reference week, the total hours and days reported will understate the actual amount of time spent at work. Because dual jobholding can be a functional equivalent to working long hours on a single job, there are many applications in which we might like to see the data tabulated for all jobs combined. A reestimation on this basis increases the share of the work force shown to be working more than 40 hours, and reduces the share working 40 hours or less. Overall, it expands the share working more than 40 hours by 12.3 percent, with still greater impact on the estimates for women (19.7 percent), blacks (17.0 percent), and men and women ages 16 to 24 (14.7 percent and 28.5 percent respectively).⁸

DESPITE THE FACT that the majority of workers still report maintaining a 40-hour/5-day workweek, there is evidence that this scheme has been declining in popularity. Employment in such schedules has lagged behind total employment growth since 1979. Throughout the 1973–85 period, long-hour/long-day schemes have been contracting, both for men

and for women.

In their place, three other schemes are emerging. Both sexes have demonstrated increased readiness to work a simple compressed workweek, wherein 40 hours of work are completed in under 5 days. Those working more than 40 hours per week appear to be working more compact schedules within the confines of a 5-day week (or less), holding two or more days free for other activities. Among those working 40 hours or less, some appear to be adopting "work spreading" schemes, which distribute their hours over 5¹/₂ or more days per week. The result is a diversification of schedules which has occurred without much corresponding change in the mean or median estimates of usual hours or days worked per week.

In the aggregate, men continue to work more hours per week, more hours per day, and more days per week than do women, and they are also more likely to work on weekends. Elements of the standard workweek thus continue to dominate overall work schedule distributions. Nonetheless, the growth of the female work force has been most rapid in long hours schedules and those involving 5¹/₂ or more days per week, while the expansion of the male labor force has occurred primarily in shorter, more compact schedule groupings. □

— FOOTNOTES —

¹ For a discussion of past trends, see Janice Neipert Hedges and Daniel E. Taylor, "Recent trends in worktime: hours edge downward," *Monthly Labor Review*, March 1980, p. 4.

² The Fair Labor Standards Act became effective in 1940.

³ See Employment Standards Administration, *Minimum Wage and Maximum Hours: Standards Under the Fair Labor Standards Act—1984 Report* (U.S. Department of Labor, 1984).

⁴ These data exclude workers in contract construction; all governmental establishments and government-owned and operated businesses (such as water utilities, transit authorities, and so forth); medical and educational services; and administrative, executive, professional, and part-time employees. Also excluded are persons who are self-employed, or who work anything other than the day shift. See *Area Wage Surveys: Metropolitan Areas, United States and Regional Summaries, 1973–1974 and 1985* (Bureau of Labor Statistics).

⁵ The May 1985 supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS) requested information on usual rather than scheduled hours. As such, it picks up the added effects of routine overtime and uncompensated long hours. In addition, the CPS information has been collected from household respondents, rather than employers' records as in the Area Wage Survey. Results of the two surveys are not directly comparable, but should normally reinforce one another's findings.

⁶ Figures for 1973 exclude private household workers, and those not reporting work schedules. Figures for 1985 have been adjusted to distribute nonresponse.

⁷ If private household workers had been included in distributions for both years, it is likely that the drop of the 40-hour week and the rise of the 49-or-more-hour week would both have been somewhat less pronounced.

⁸ There may still be some omissions, because no hours details were collected for tertiary jobs.