

# TIME | AT WORK AND NOT AT WORK

2025 MORLEY GUNDERSON LECTURE  
IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND LABOUR ECONOMICS



## TRADITIONAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many indigenous people from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

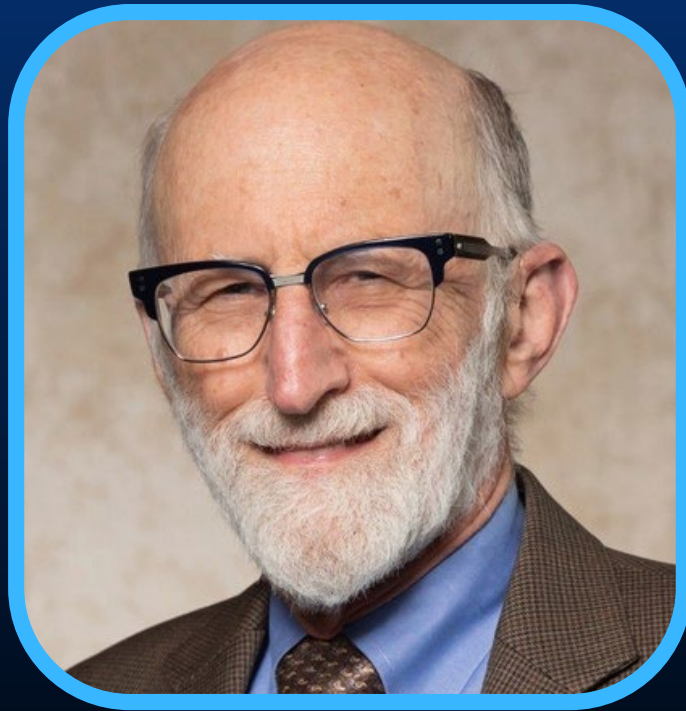
## ITINERARY

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 4:00 P M | Welcome Remarks and Acknowledgement of Traditional Land                 |
| 4:15 P M | Presentation of Morley Gunderson Prize to Tony Fang                     |
| 4:25 P M | <i>Time: At Work and Not at Work</i> with Professor Daniel S. Hamermesh |
| 5:30 P M | Questions and Final Remarks   |

**TONY FANG**  
**2025 MORLEY GUNDERSON PRIZE RECIPIENT**



**DANIEL S. HAMERMESH**  
**2025 MORLEY GUNDERSON LECTURER**



# **Morley Gunderson—Lecture?????**

**AMAZING!**



# **Time: Working—and Not Working**

**Daniel S. Hamermesh**

Univ. of Texas at Austin; IZA; NBER

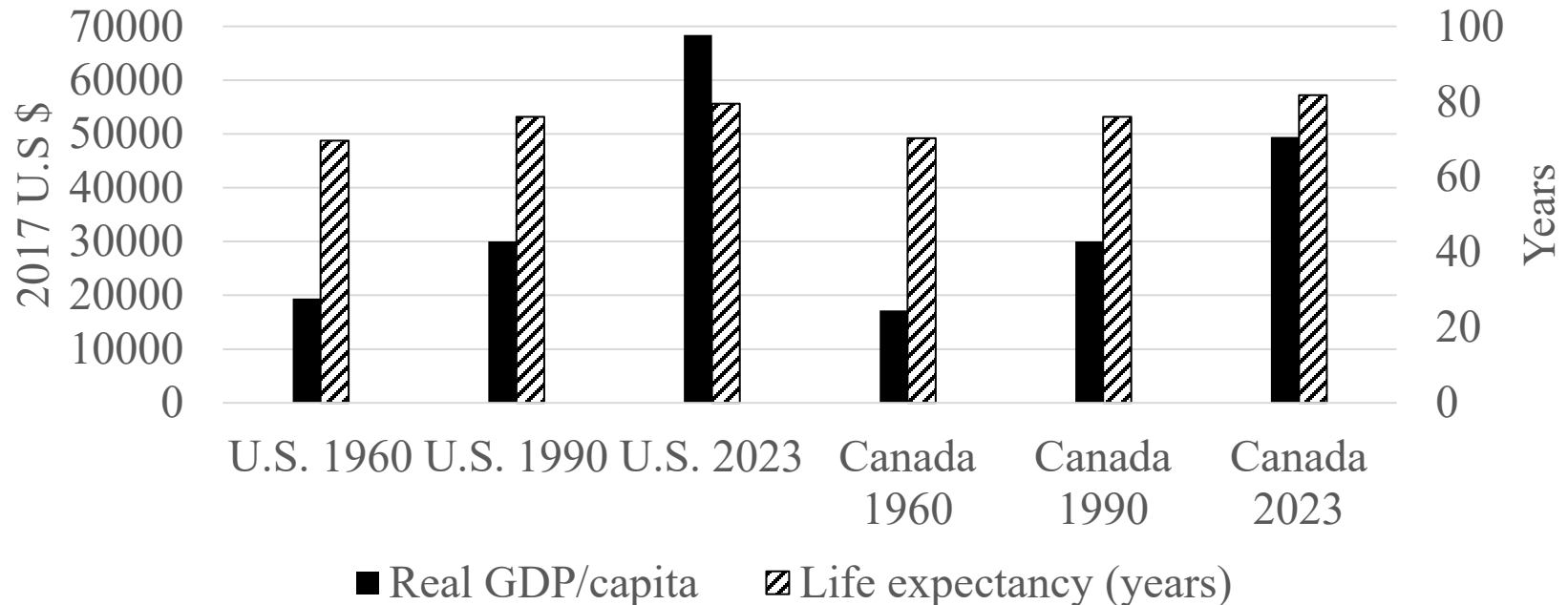
**Morley Gunderson Lecture**

University of Toronto, April 2025



# 1. Do We Have More Money or More Time than our Grandparents?

Real GDP/capita, and Life Expectancy:  
U.S., Canada, 1960-2023





We think money is scarce, and it is—we all want more money. But for more and more of us, it is time that is scarce.

That is true for richer people, and among richer countries.

Figure is even sharper for middle-income countries—Brazil, Mexico.



## 2. How Can We Classify Time?

- **Time diaries—how they work.**
- Keep diary next day, what you did each minute yesterday.
- **Categories of activities:**
- **Paid work**
- Your job, time in class and doing schoolwork—and time spent looking for a job or commuting.



- **Home production**
- Childcare, cooking, cleaning, walking the dog, etc.
  - Things that you could pay somebody to perform for you.
- **Required (personal) activities**
  - Sleeping, eating, washing up, sex, etc.
  - Things that you cannot pay somebody to perform for you but that you must do yourself.



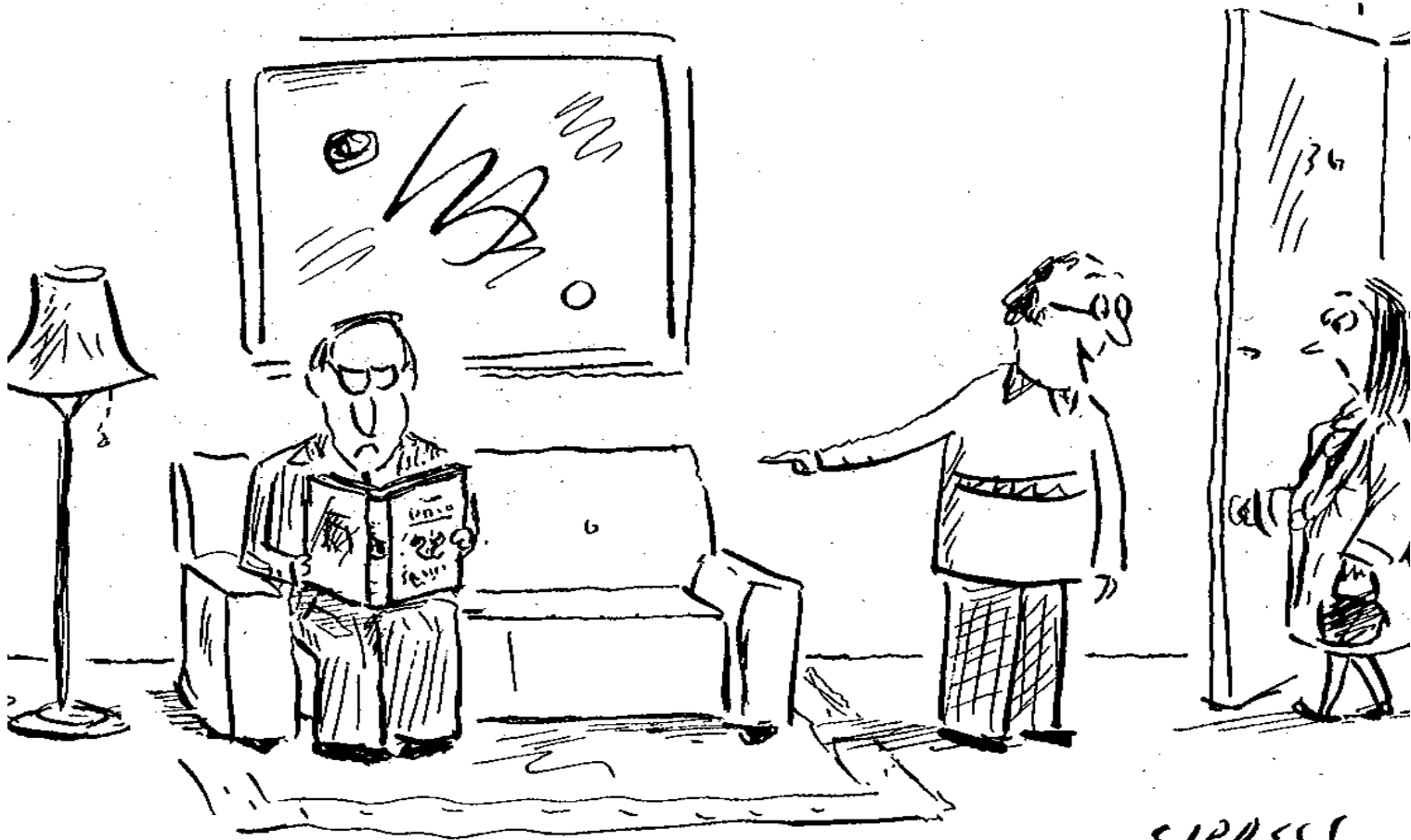


"My husband and I make love 6 times a week.  
We outsourced our sex life to a young couple overseas."



# Leisure

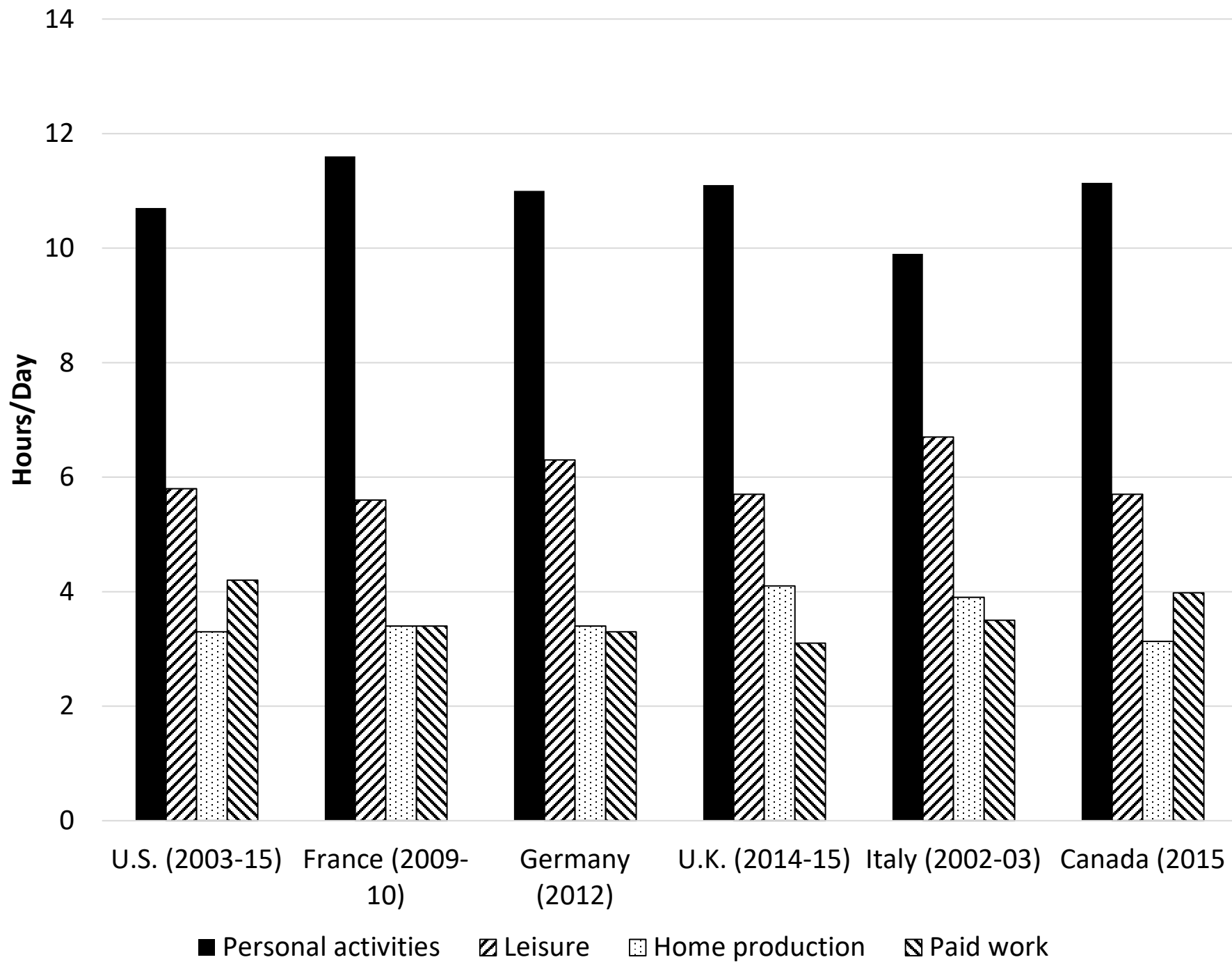
Television watching, exercising, sporting events, religious activities, etc. Things that you enjoy, are not required to do, but must do for yourself.



SIPRESS

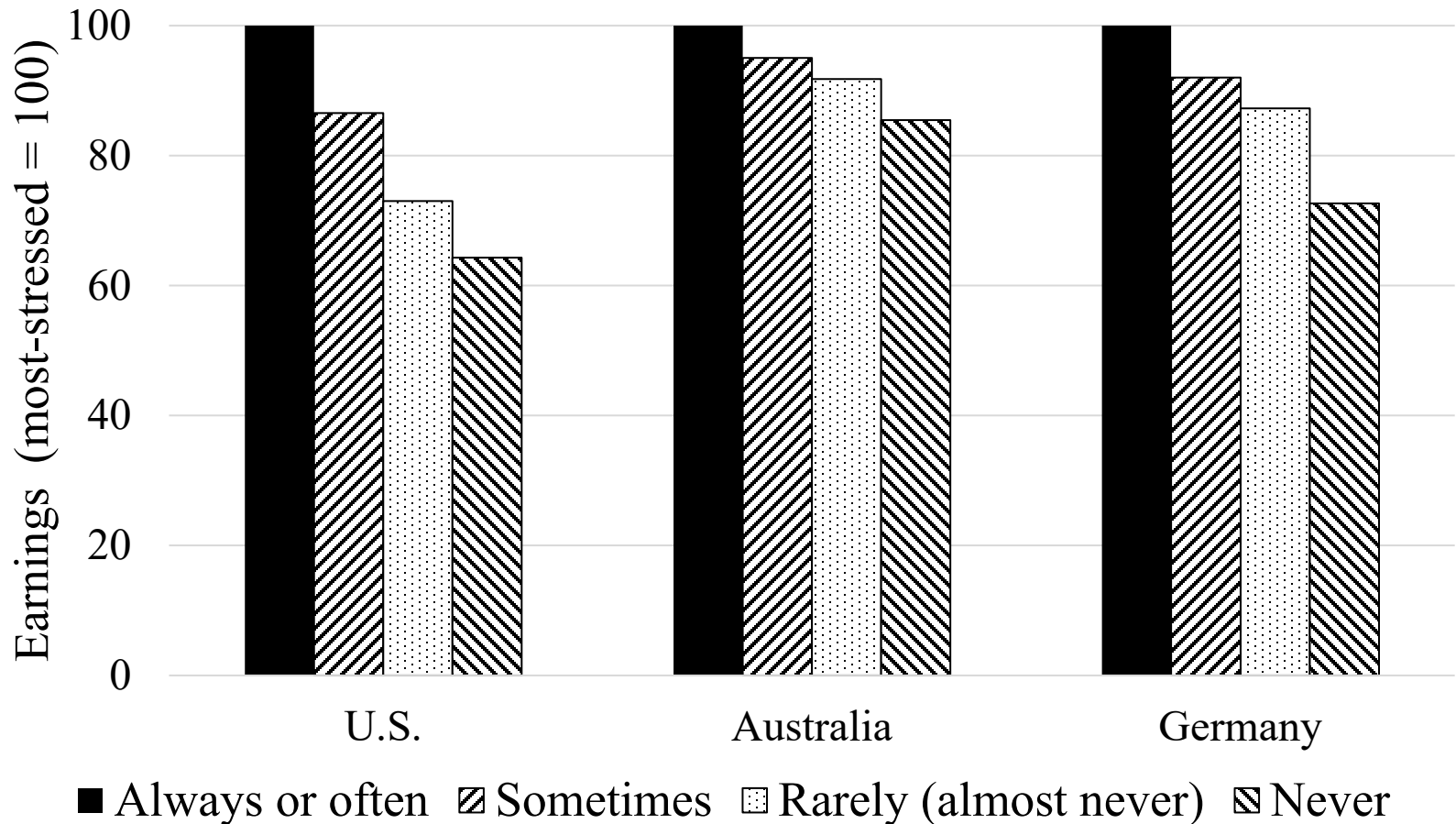
*"That's the guy I hired to read Proust for me."*





### 3. Stressed For Time?

#### a. Rich or Poor?



This makes sense—it takes time spend money.

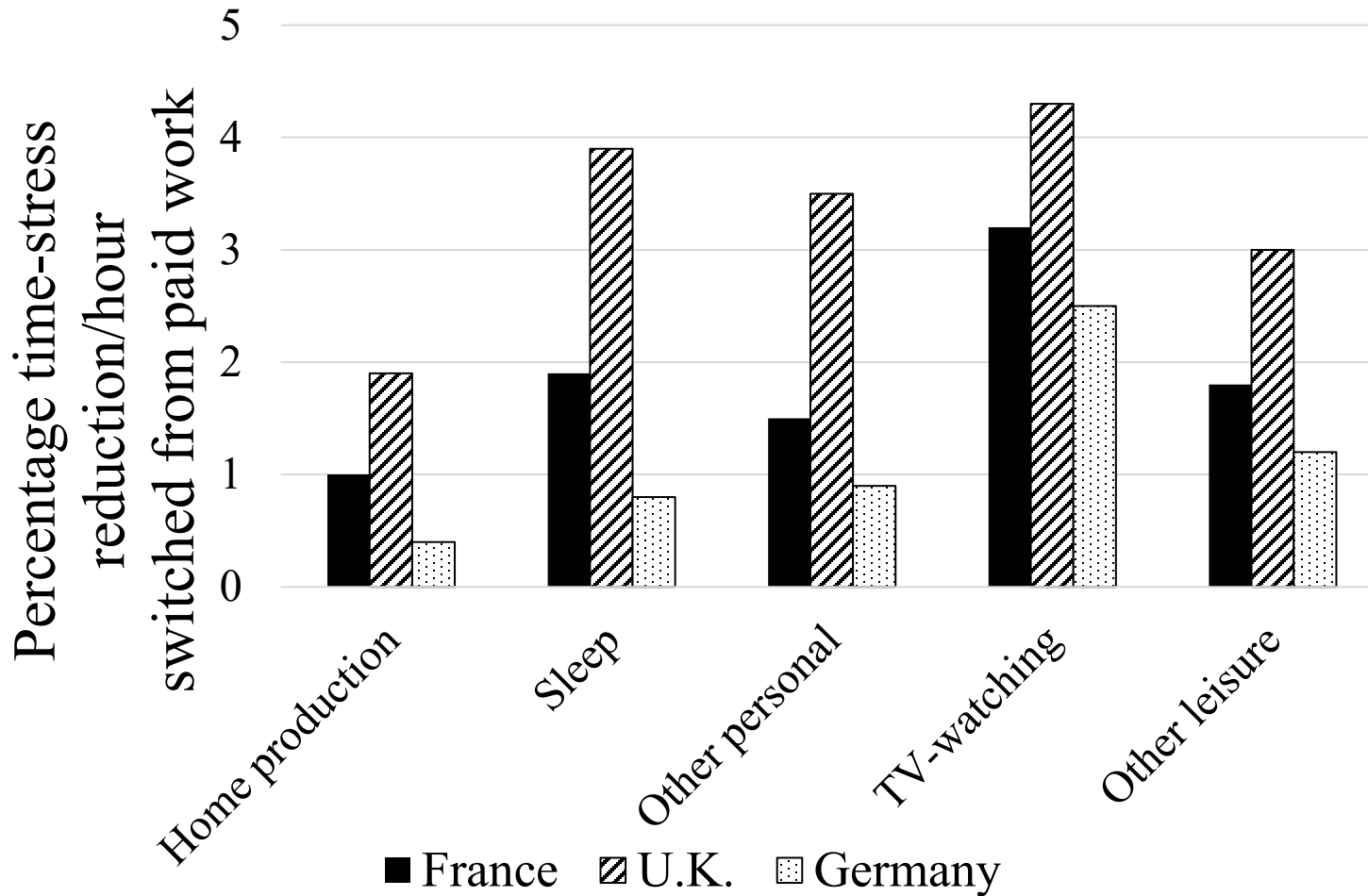
True even if no work--higher partner income, more time-stress.

“So many toys--so little unstructured time”





## b. What is stressful?



In F, DE and UK, paid work is the most time-stressing.  
TV-watching, sleep the least.



# **4. The Rich Are Different from Us?**

**[F. Scott Fitzgerald]**

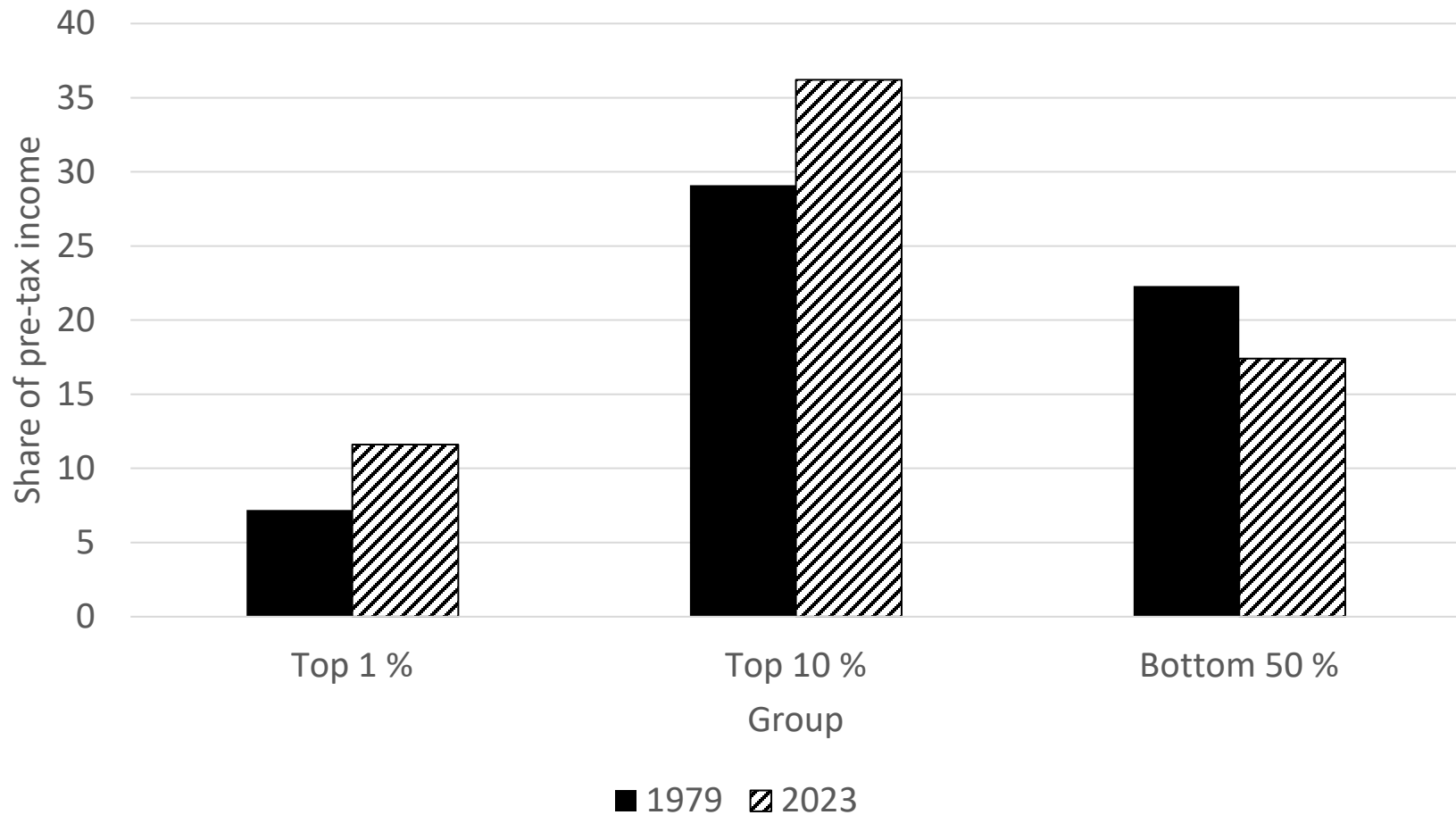
What is rich, poor in the U.S., Canada? Who are the rich?

Who works more, rich or poor?

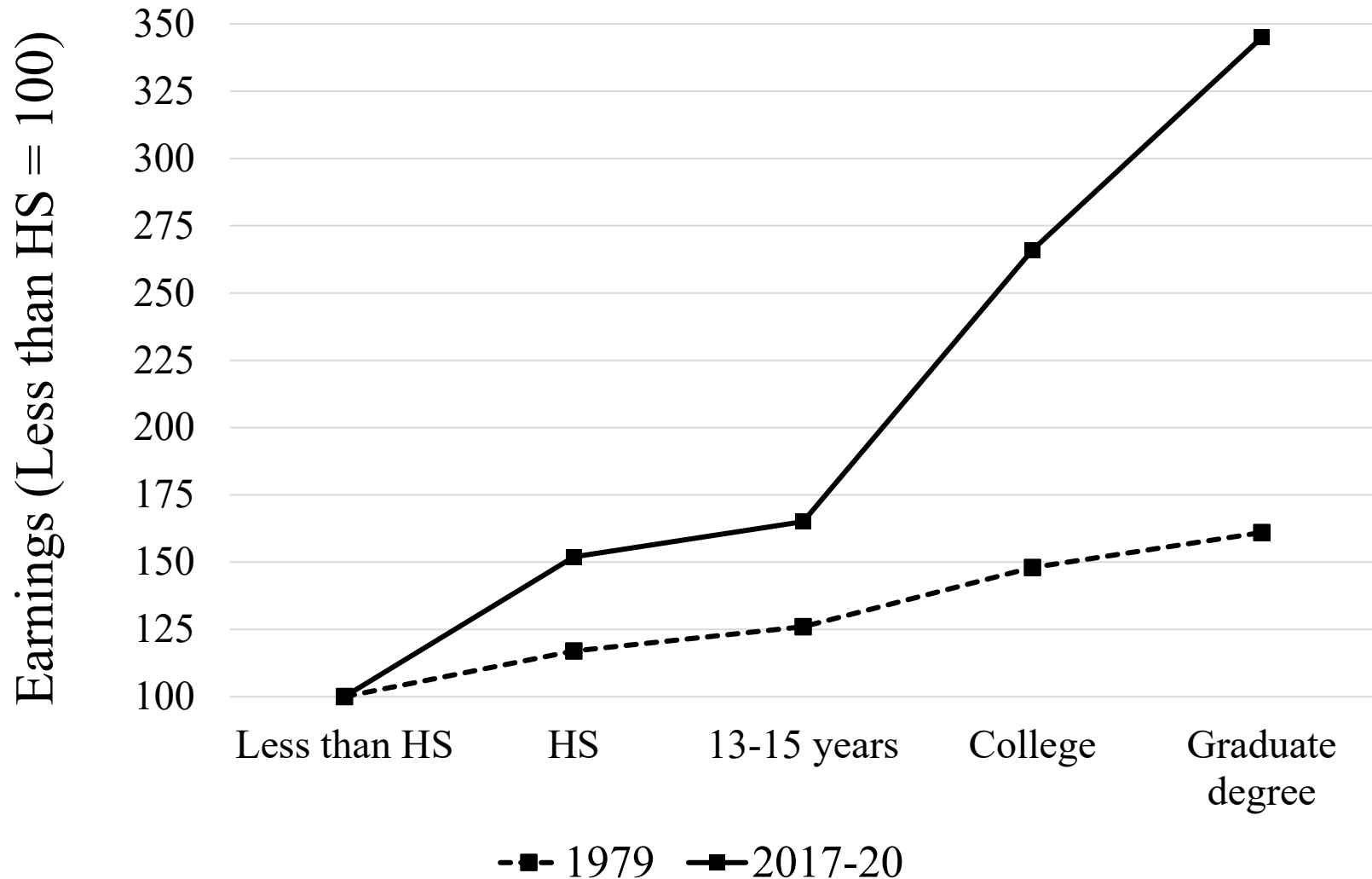
How do the rich and the poor spend time when not working?



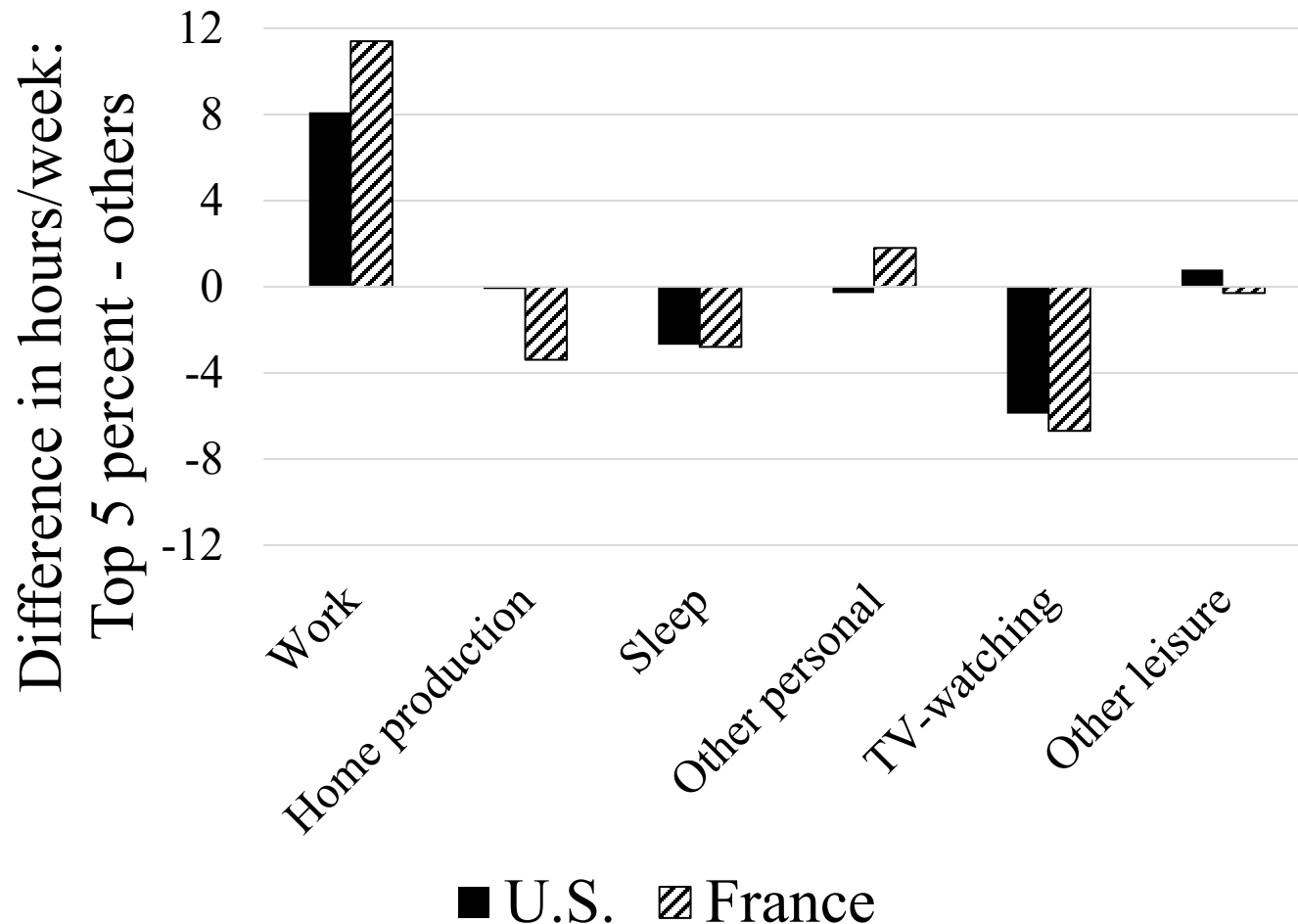
# Substantial inequality in Canada—and it's grown



Education is the main determinant—and it's getting more important. (US data)



The rich are different! They do much more paid work, make up for it by watching much less TV, sleeping less. Even non-working rich sleep less, watch less TV than other non-workers



## 5. *Vive la Différence?*

### a. Who does more paid work—men or women?

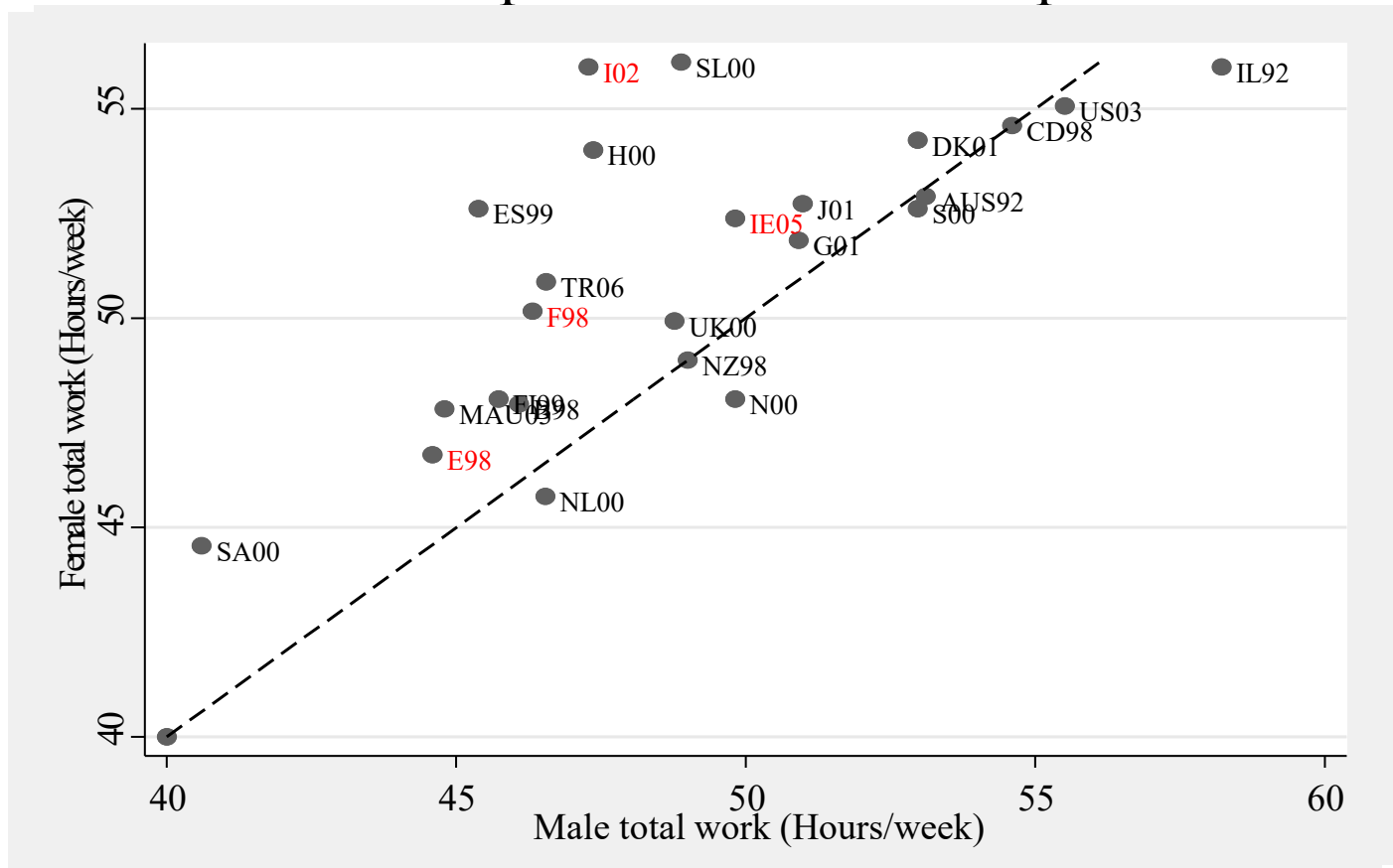


Canada (and elsewhere): Men. They also put in longer hours per week if working. Work is most stressful, so men should be more time-stressed.

In fact, women are more time-stressed in all rich countries.

## b. Who works more *IN TOTAL*?

Define total work as paid work and home production.

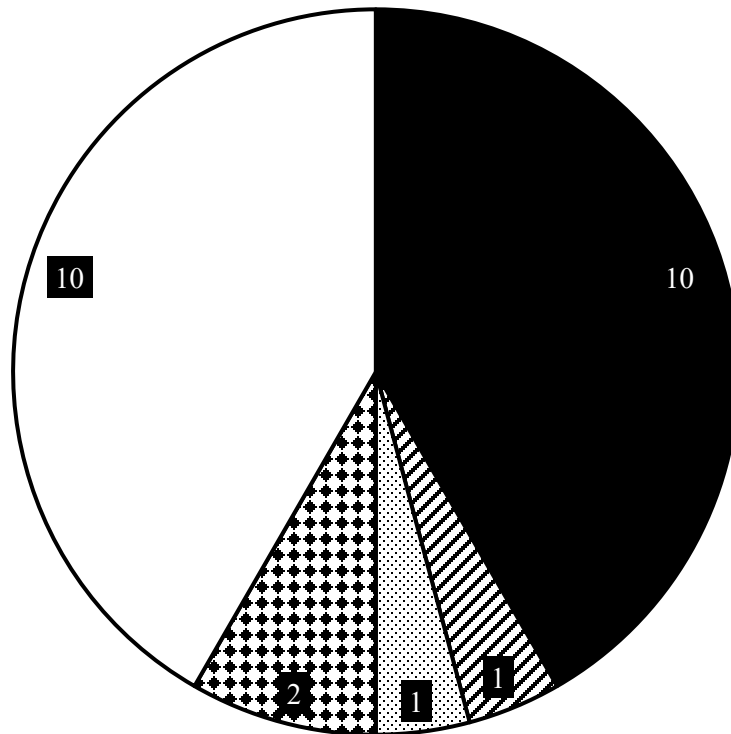


In rich northern countries, totals are within 1 hour/week.  
Canada 2015: Men 49.6, women 49.8 hours/week/



## 6. Togetherness—what does it mean? How much is there?

When are partners together? Same location/room? Same activity? Same activity together? For typical U.S. couple, this is description. Western Europe—a bit more togetherness than in U.S.—because less work.



■ A: One works

▨ B: Same place and activity, together

▤ C: Same place and activity, separate

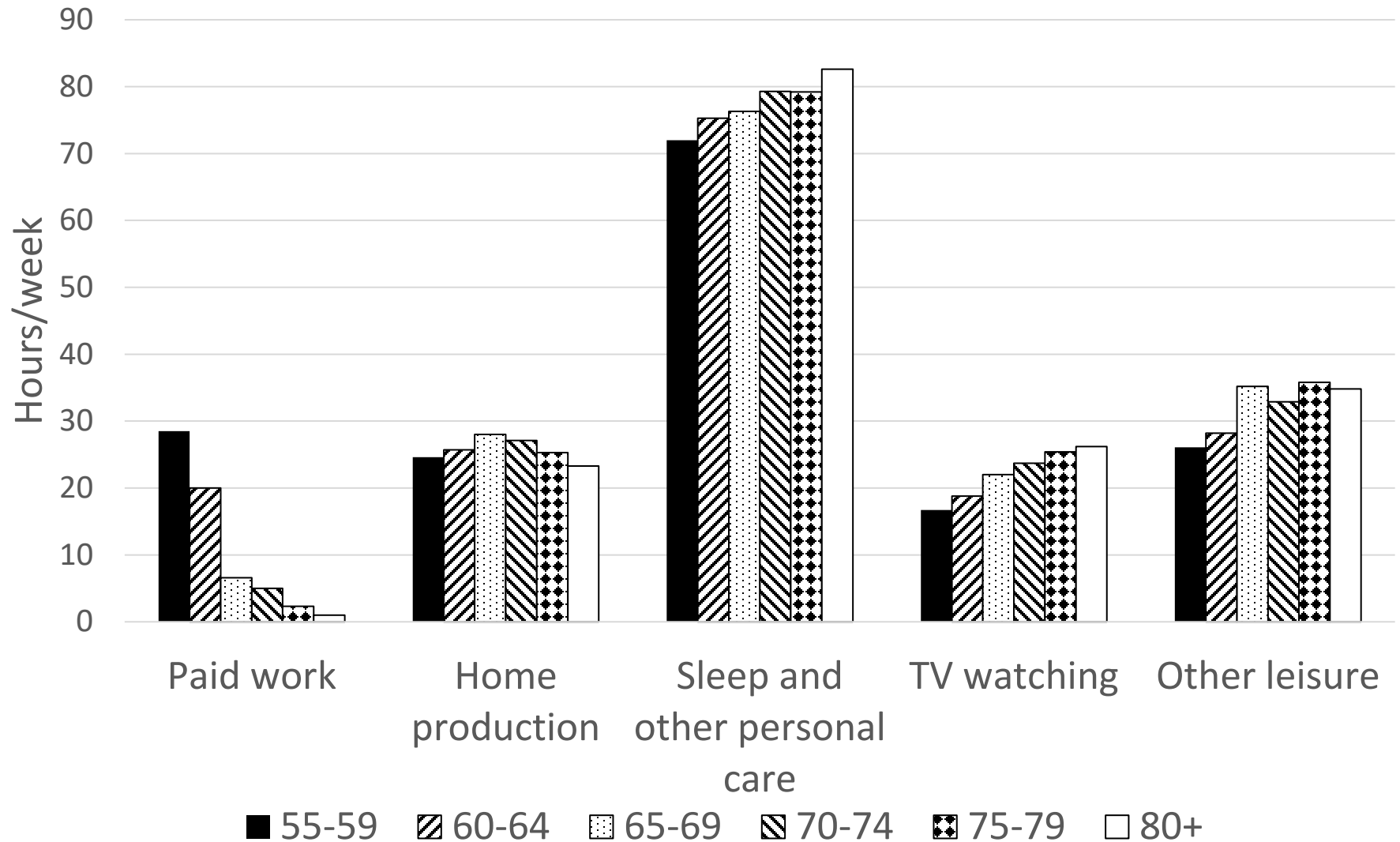
▥ D: Same place, different activity

□ E: Not same place, or sleep





## 7. Is it a “drag ... growing old?” (M. Jagger)



Canada 2015. By age 70 very little paid work. And little more home production. More sleep—and especially more TV.

## 8. Health, disability and time use

- A. How do ill-health, disability affect time use? Make it difficult to do some things, switch activities. Will do fewer different things.
- B. Canada, 2005 and 2010, people 65+, adjusted for many characteristics: How many non-work activities?

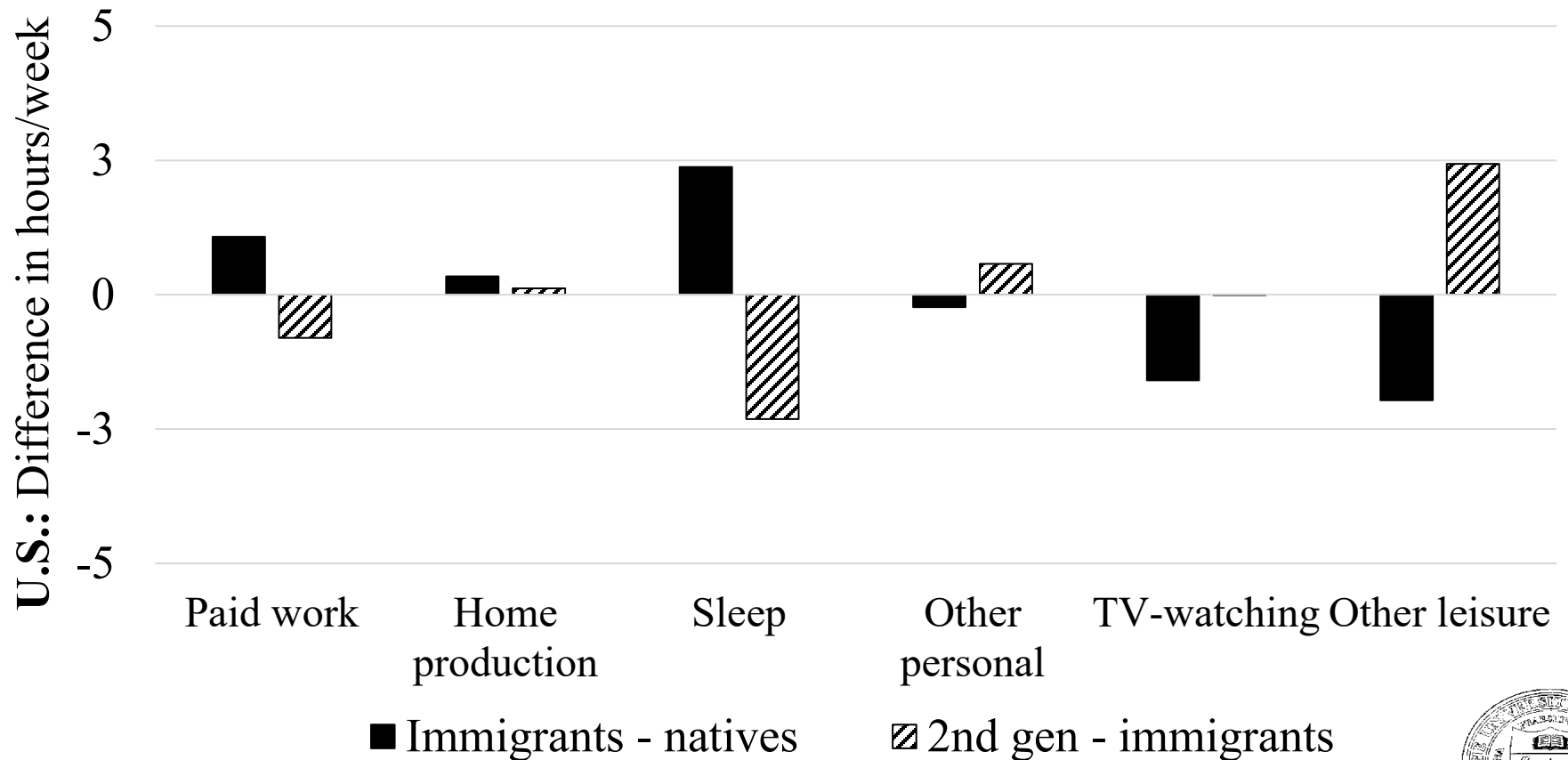
	Men	Women
Average # (56 possible)	9.6	10.3
Disability	-2%	-5%
At least good health	+3%	+10%
Fair health (compared to poor health)	+1.5%	+5%

# 9. Are immigrants lazy?

Today's immigrant = tomorrow's citizen. Their kids are natives. How about their time use (adjusted for demographics)?

**Canada immigrant-native is similar:**

Work +2.5; home prod +1; sleep/pers +2; TV -2.5; other leisure -3.



# 10. Have we gotten more time?

Maybe 15% additional life expectancy—tiny.

**Work** No less, as we saw

**Home production**—think of all the time-saving devices. But <3 hours/day freed up compared to 1900.

**Personal time**—sleeping? Sex? Grooming. All may be higher quality, but no less time.

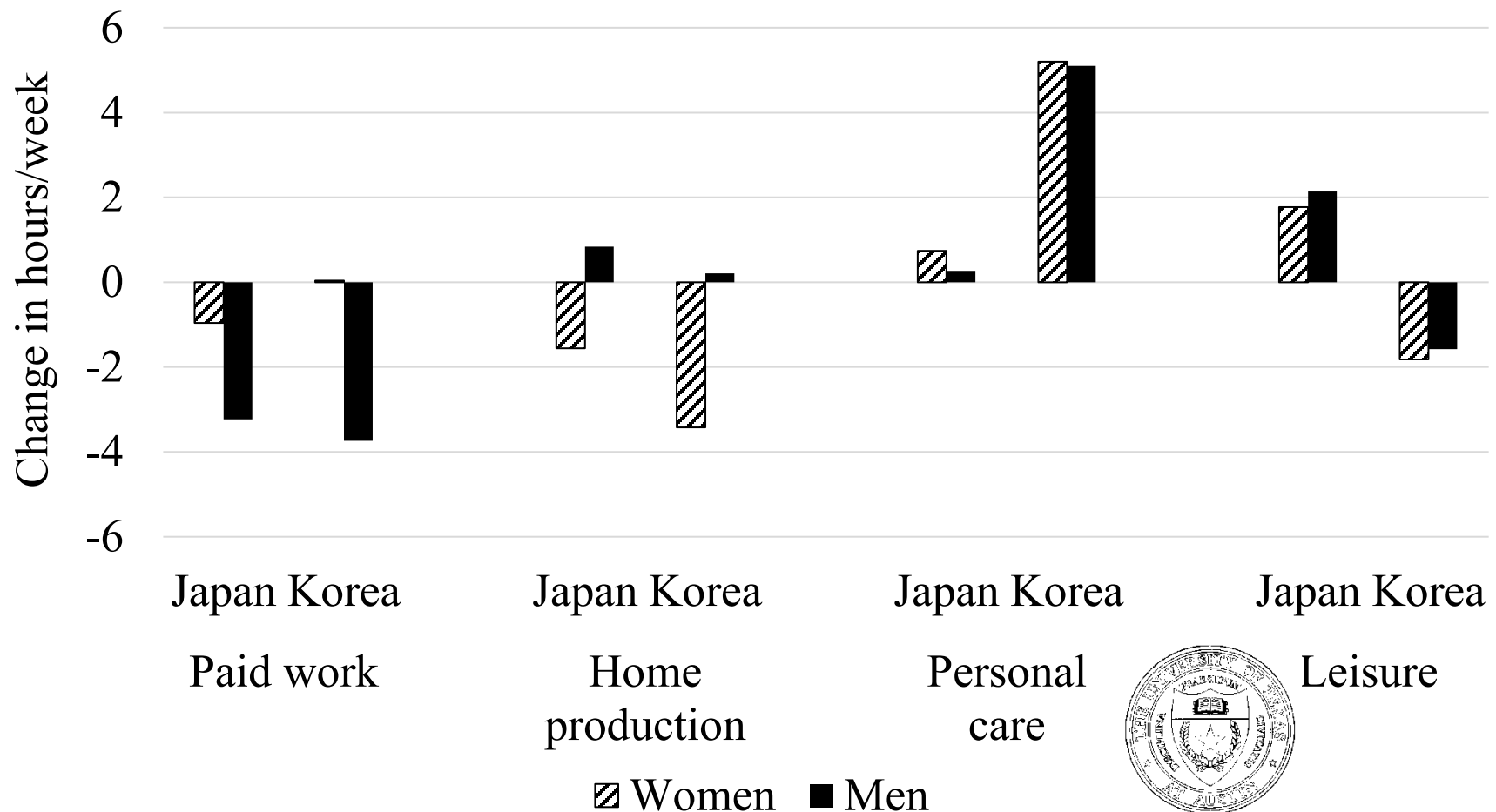
**Leisure**—more enjoyable. But no saving of time

Even with new technologies, very little more time compared to more income.



# 11. How is a permanent ↓ in work time used?

Japan in the late 1980s, Korea early 2000s,  
government ↓ standard workweek. Effects:



None of the time off from paid work was used to do work at home. Mostly TV-watching, or grooming.

In U.S. in Great Recession—mostly extra sleep time.

Implication: If we reduce work time, people choose to enjoy themselves or take better care of themselves. Not things that they could pay other people to do, not “worthwhile” things.

Do people want this? Yes—those affected by imposed cuts in worktime were happier with life.

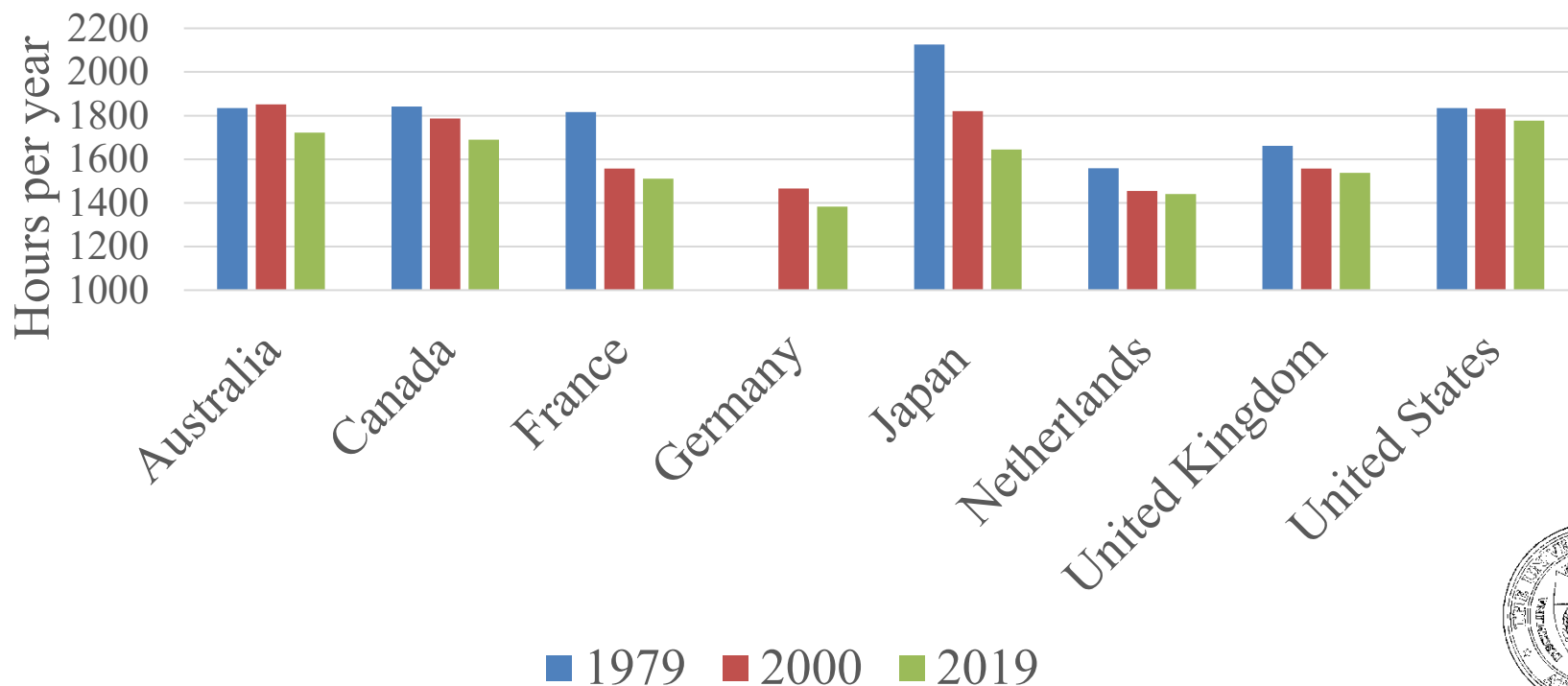


## 12. How much people work for pay

Labor-force participation in Canada 65%, a bit more than U.S., more than France, Germany, Japan, less than Australia, Sweden. Average workweeks in Canada, elsewhere are same—35-37 hours by those who work that week.

**BUT:**

Annual Hours Worked/Employee, 1979-2019



# How can this be??

## Same participation, same weekly hours, **if at work, BUT:**

No mandated vacation, U.S. average is 2 weeks/year.

Every other rich country has at least 4 weeks of government required paid vacation. Many have 5 or 6 weeks.

Paid holidays—count them. U.S. has fewer than elsewhere.

This wasn't true 30 years ago. WHY haven't we changed?

NOT: Consumerism—no greater increase here than elsewhere.

NOT: Decline of unions—they've declined in many countries.

YES: Political stalemate, lack of political will.

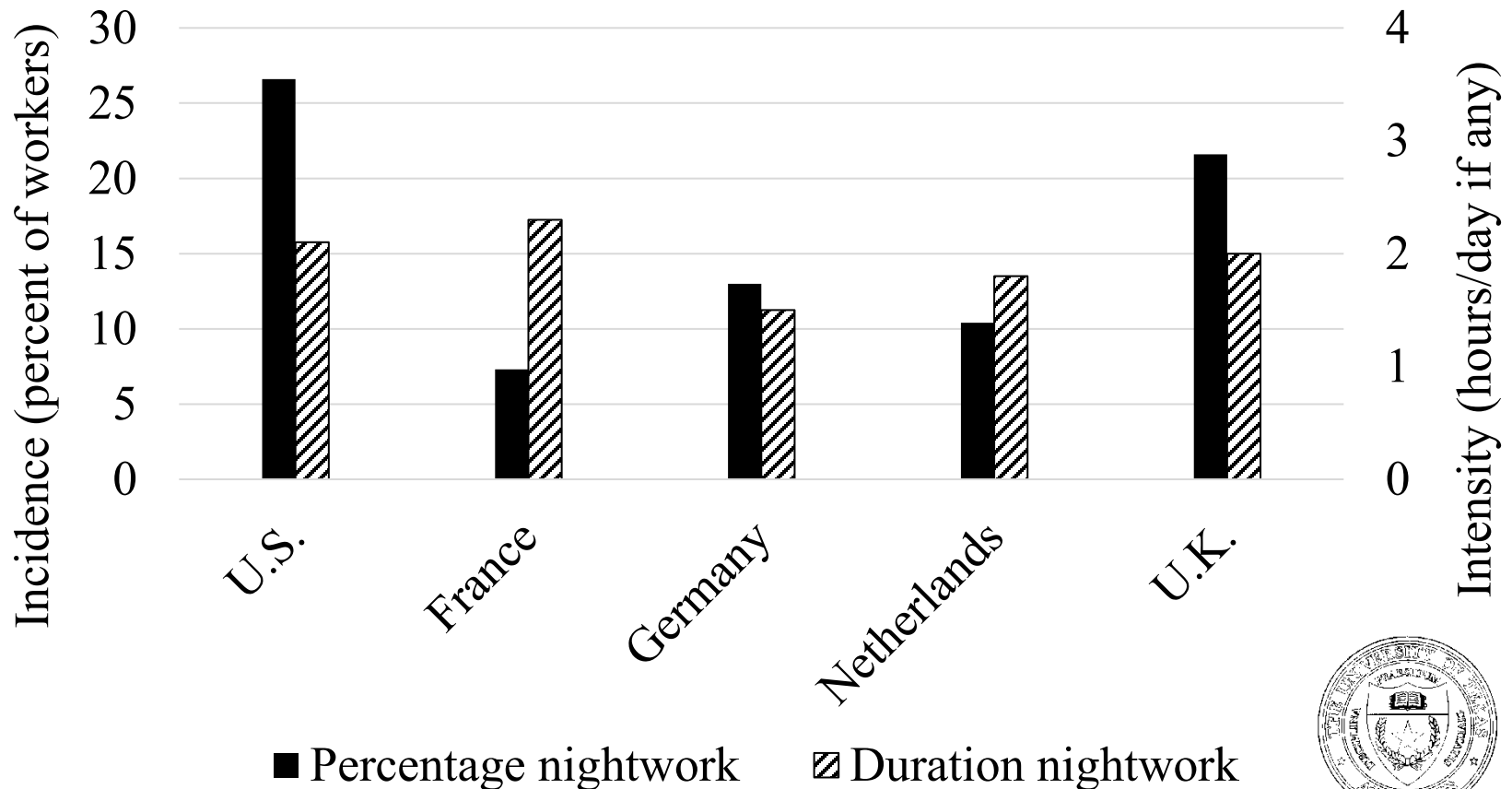




## b. When we work

Much more weekend work in US than other rich countries.

Many more people working evenings/nights. Especially for lower-income and minority workers. BUT: US trend is toward less night work (but no similar trend in UK).



# 13. What can be done?

a. Individually—self-control to reduce time-stress

b. Company: Free-will scheduling; 32-hour weeks

Communities: Agreed “time-outs.”

Problem with these: Incentives are wrong

c. Covid-19 effects? Perhaps more time for non-work if more tele-work, less commute time. A slight silver lining.

d. Only government action will overcome low-level equilibrium!

e. What will matter—what policies will increase desirable variety within a time period, over a lifetime?



1. **Require two-week notice for cancelled schedules** in retail, overtime for surprise call-in (as in NYC, Seattle). Will reduce uncertainty burden, esp. on women, low-skilled.

2. Most important: Mandate at least **3 weeks paid vacations**

a. Will get US off the rat-race. Low-cost—doesn't seem to hurt other rich economies—I estimate <2% of GDP. Smaller than useless damages we do to economy (e.g., Trump tariffs).

b. Virtue that no entrenched positions—unlike most other policy proposals.



**Q & A**

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING US THIS EVENING**