

LMF2.1: Usual working hours per week by gender

Definitions and methodology

This indicator presents information on usual working hours by gender through the distribution of employed men and employed women across five hours bands for usual weekly working hours:

- i. 1-19 hours per week
- ii. 20-29 hours per week
- iii. 30-34 hours per week
- iv. 35-39 hours per week
- v. 40 hours or more per week

Data for most countries concern usual weekly working hours in the main job, and cover all employed (both employees and self-employed) of all ages. The definition of usual weekly working hours includes overtime if it occurs systematically, but irregular or unusual overtime is not included. Data for Australia and New Zealand refer to usual weekly working hours in *all* jobs, rather than just the main job, while data for Japan and Korea refer to *actual* weekly working hours in all jobs. For China, Hong Kong (China), and Singapore, the specific hours bands sometimes differ slightly from those defined above (see the notes to Chart LMF2.1.A for more detail).

In addition to the information on usual weekly working hours, this indicator also provides supplementary information on commuting times and the additional time that workers spend travelling to and from work itself in Box LMF2.1.A. Data are presented through one main measure:

- *Average time spent travelling to and from work or study by sex, in minutes per day, 15-64 year-olds.* Data come from national time use surveys, and cover the average daily time (in minutes) men and women spend commuting/traveling from home to their place of work or, where relevant, study. Data cover all men and women in the given age range regardless of whether or not they are in employed or actively engaged in education. Data for China refer to 15-74 year olds rather than 15-64 year olds.

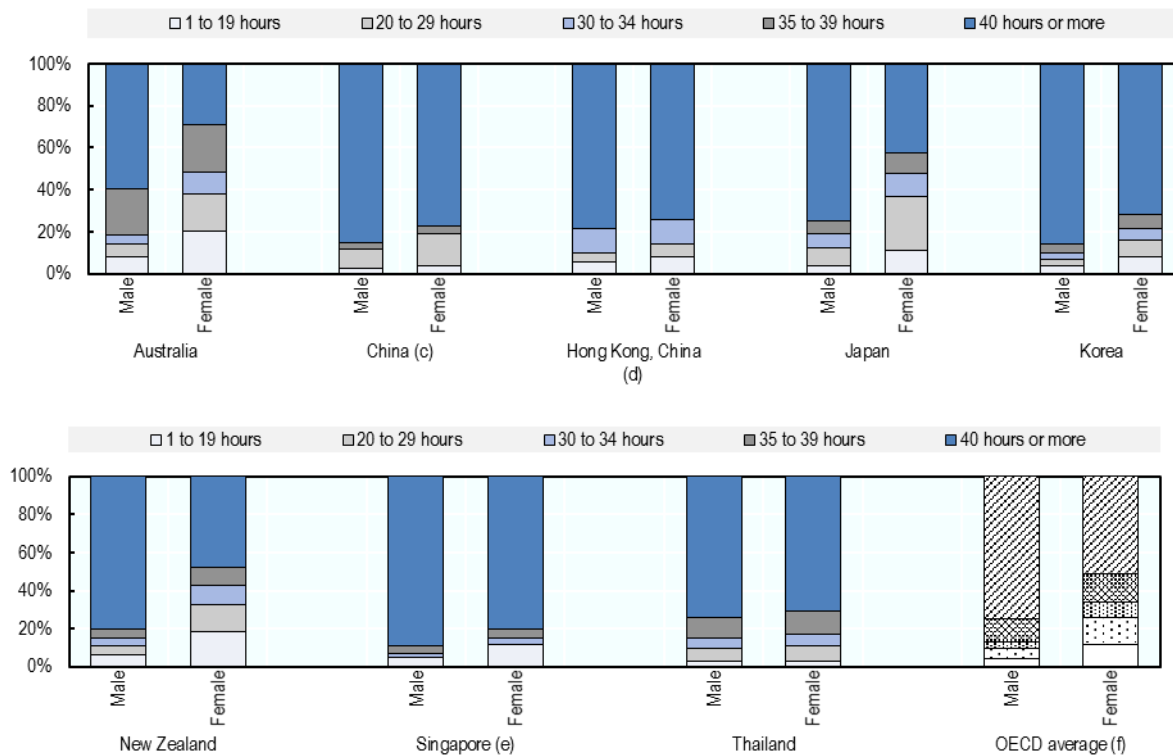
Key findings

The distribution of working hours and gender differences in the distribution of working hours differs considerably across Asia/Pacific countries (Chart LMF2.1.A). In most of the covered countries in East and South East Asia, the large majority of workers (both male and female) usually work 40 or more hours per week; indeed, in all of China, Hong Kong (China), Korea, Singapore, and Thailand, at least 70% of employed women and 75% of employed men work 40 or more hours per week. However, in Australia, New Zealand and also Japan, a much lower share of female workers in particular work 40 or more hours per week. In these countries, employed women are much more likely to work part-time: in all three at least 30% of employed women work fewer than 30 hours per week, and in Australia and New Zealand around 20% work fewer than 20 hours per week.

Other relevant indicators: LMF1.4 Employment profiles over the life-course; LMF1.6 Gender differences in employment outcomes

Chart LMF2.1.A. Distribution of the employed by usual weekly working hours bands and gender, 2015 or latest available^a

Distribution (%) of male and female employed (all ages) by usual weekly working hours bands^b



a) For China, data refer to 2010

b) For Japan and Korea, data refer to actual weekly working hours rather than usual weekly working hours. For Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand, data refer to all jobs rather than the main job.

c) For China, usual weekly working hours bands refer to 1-19, 20-34, 35-39, and 40 hours or more. The band labelled '20 to 29 hours' refers to 20 to 34 hours.

d) For Hong Kong, usual weekly working hours bands refer to 1-19, 20-29, 30-39, and 40 hours or more. The band labelled '30 to 34 hours' refers to 30 to 39 hours.

e) For Singapore, usual weekly working hours bands refer to less than 30, 30-34, 35-39, and 40 hours or more. The band labelled '1 to 19 hours' refers to 1 to 29 hours.

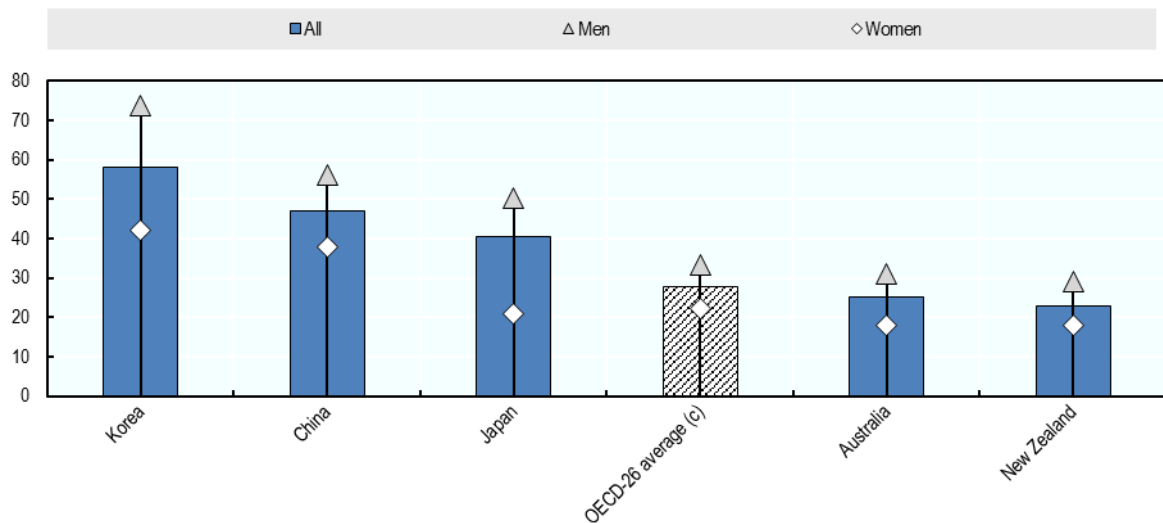
f) The OECD average refers to the unweighted average across the OECD member countries. See OECD Family Database Indicator LMF2.1 (<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>) for more detail.

Sources: [Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand: OECD Employment Database](#); [China: Population Census 2010](#); [Hong Kong, China: Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics](#); [OECD average: OECD Family Database Indicator LMF2.1](#); [Singapore: Ministry of Manpower, Labour Force in Singapore](#); [Thailand: Labour Force Survey \(Third Quarter\)](#)

Box LMF2.1.A: Time spent commuting

In addition to the time spent actually at work, many employed men and women have to spend a considerable portion of their day commuting and travelling between work and home. Comparable data on time spent commuting are available for only a few Asia/Pacific countries, but the data that are available suggest large differences in commuting times across countries (Box Chart LMF2.1.C). In Australia and New Zealand, for example, the average time individuals devote to travelling to and from work is relatively short. In these two countries, individuals spend an average of about 23-25 minutes each day traveling back and forth from work or study - averages that are just a little short of the cross-country average for OECD countries (28 minutes). In China, Japan and Korea, by contrast, the average time spent commuting is far longer. In Japan and China, individuals spend, on average, 40 and 47 minutes per day traveling to and from work or study, respectively. In Korea, this average rises to as high as 58 minutes per day.

Box Chart LMF2.1.C: **Average time spent travelling to and from work, latest available year^a**
 Average time spent travelling to and from work or study, in minutes per day, 15-64 year-olds^b



a) Data for Australia refer to 2006, for China to 2008, for Korea to 2009, for Japan to 2011, for New Zealand to 2009-10.

b) Data for China refer to 15-74 year olds

c) The OECD average refers to the unweighted average across the OECD member countries. See OECD Family Database Indicator LMF2.6 (<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>) for more detail.

Sources: [All countries and OECD-26 average: OECD Family Database Indicator LMF2.6](#)

In most Asia/Pacific countries, the share of the workforce working 40 or more hours per week is declining (Chart LMF2.1.B). In all covered countries with available data other than China and, marginally, New Zealand, the proportion of both employed men and employed women working 40 or more hours per week has fallen over the last decade, sometimes substantially. In Korea, for example, the share of employed men working 40 or more hours per week has fallen by 7.2 percentage points since 2005, and the share of employed women by 12.8 p.p. In Thailand, the share for both employed men and employed women has declined by about 12 p.p. The main exception here is China – there, the share of employed men working 40 or more hours per week has increased by 10.2 p.p. since 2005, and the share of employed women by 9.1 p.p.

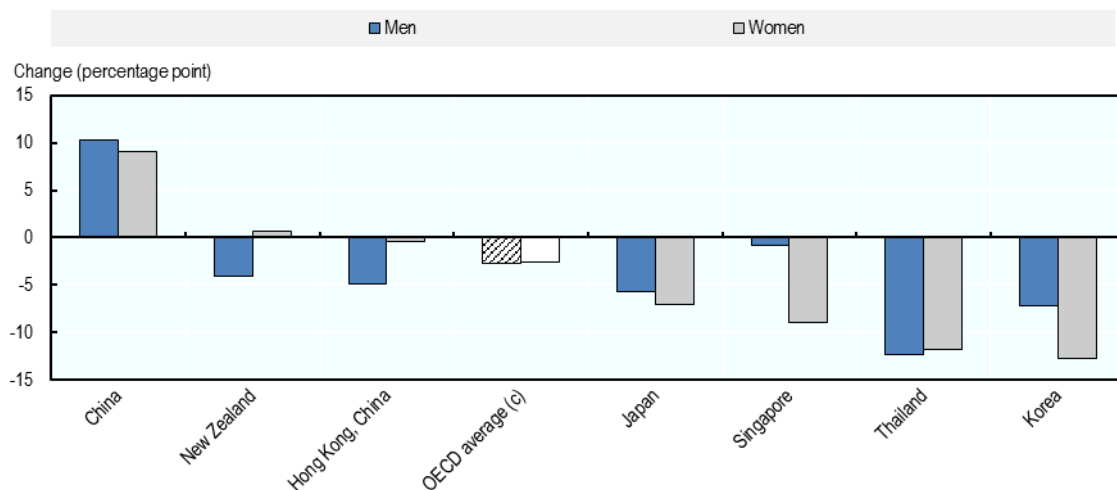
Comparability and data issues

Most of the data on working hours used in this indicator are taken from or are based on information from national labour force surveys or household surveys or, in the case of China, the national population census. Organisations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) set out and define numerous [standards and guidelines](#) that should be followed by countries when conducting labour force surveys and producing labour statistics, which should help reduce comparability issues. However, one main issue should still be noted:

- For Charts LMF2.1.A and LMF2.1.B, information on the distribution of working hours is based on a standard definition of ‘working hours’ as usual weekly working hours in the main job. However, for Japan and Korea the data used are *actual* hours worked, while for Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand the jobs covered are *all* jobs. Relative to other countries, these differences may

lead to an overestimation of the share of the employed working longer hours and an underestimation of the share of the employed working shorter hours in Australia, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand.

Chart LMF2.1.B. Percentage point change in the proportion of the employed working 40 hours or more, by gender, 1995 to 2015 or latest available^a
 Percentage point change in the proportion (%) of the employed (all ages) with usual weekly working hours^b equal to 40 hours or more, 1995 to 2015 or latest available^a



a) For Hong Kong, data refer to 1996 instead of 1995, for Japan to 2001 instead of 1995, and for China to 2010 instead of 2015

b) For Japan and Korea, data refer to actual weekly working hours rather than usual weekly working hours. For Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand, data refer to all jobs rather than the main job.

c) The OECD average refers to the unweighted average across OECD member countries with available and comparable data. See OECD Family Database Indicator LMF2.1 (<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>) for more detail.

Sources: [Australia, Japan, Korea and New Zealand: OECD Employment Database](#); China: One Percent Population Sampling Survey; Population Census 2010; [Hong Kong, China: Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics](#); [OECD average: OECD Family Database Indicator LMF2.1](#); [Singapore: Ministry of Manpower, Labour Force in Singapore](#); Thailand: Labour Force Survey (Third Quarter)

The data on time spent travelling to and from work used in Box Chart LMF2.1.C all come from the OECD's harmonised time-use database, which itself extracts data from national time-use surveys. Efforts have been made to harmonise definitions and ensure the comparability of concepts and definitions across countries, but several factors – such as differences in sample composition, the categorisation of activities, the sampling of diary days, and the reference year – may still affect comparability. For more information on the OECD's data on time use, please see Miranda (2011), OECD (2011), and [OECD Family Database Indicators LMF2.5 and LMF2.6](#).

Sources and further reading: Miranda, V. (2011), "Cooking, Caring and Volunteering: Unpaid Work Around the World", OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 116, OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5kghrim8s142-en>; OECD (2011), Society at a Glance 2011: OECD Social Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/soc_glance-2011-en; International Labour Organization (2016), *Women at Work: Trends 2016*, ILO, Geneva; International Labour Organization (2017), *Standards and guidelines on labour statistics*, <http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/standards-and-guidelines/lang-en/index.htm>