

Issues in Labor Statistics



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Are Managers and Professionals Really Working More?

More than 60 percent of the net employment growth during the 1990s occurred among managers and professionals, occupations in which long workweeks are quite typical. Coincident with this rise in employment has been the perception that managers and professionals are working longer workweeks than in the past. However, weekly hours data for such occupations show that the average workweek has been about 42 hours during the entire decade and, in fact, has shown little variation since 1982.¹

A substantial share of managers and professionals do put in extraordinarily long workweeks. In 1999, nearly 3 in 10 worked 49 hours or more per week, compared with about 2 in 10 for all nonfarm occupations. Moreover, of the men employed as managers and professionals, about 4 in 10 worked at least 49 hours per week, twice the share among women. As shown in the accompanying chart, these proportions rose steadily during the 1980s, but showed no further increase in the 1990s. Because data from January 1994 forward are not directly comparable to those for earlier years due to a redesign of the CPS, one is cautioned to view the periods from 1989 to 1993 and from 1994 to 1999 separately. Even so, there has been very little change in any of these series since 1989. Similar trends occurred for the proportion of managers and professionals working 60 hours or more per week.

Indeed, the number of managers and professionals working long workweeks has increased, but so too has the number working fewer than 49 hours per week. Since 1994, the number of persons at work in these occupations has risen by about 6.5 million, to 38.6 million. The number working 49 hours or more has increased by nearly 1.8 million, to 10.8 million. Of the net employment increase among managers and professionals, however, the share

of those working 49 hours or more is still about 28 percent.

As for managers and professionals overall, there was relatively little change in average weekly hours for managers and professionals separately during the 1990s. (See table.) Among both men and women, the average workweek for managers and professionals alike remained about unchanged over the past 10 years, with managers working more hours per week than professionals. Women make up a growing share of all managers and professionals, and they tend to have shorter workweeks than do men. In the short-run, however, these factors have little effect on overall average weekly hours of managers and professionals. If women's shares of these occupations had remained at the 1994 level, average weekly hours for the group overall still would have changed little, edging up by only

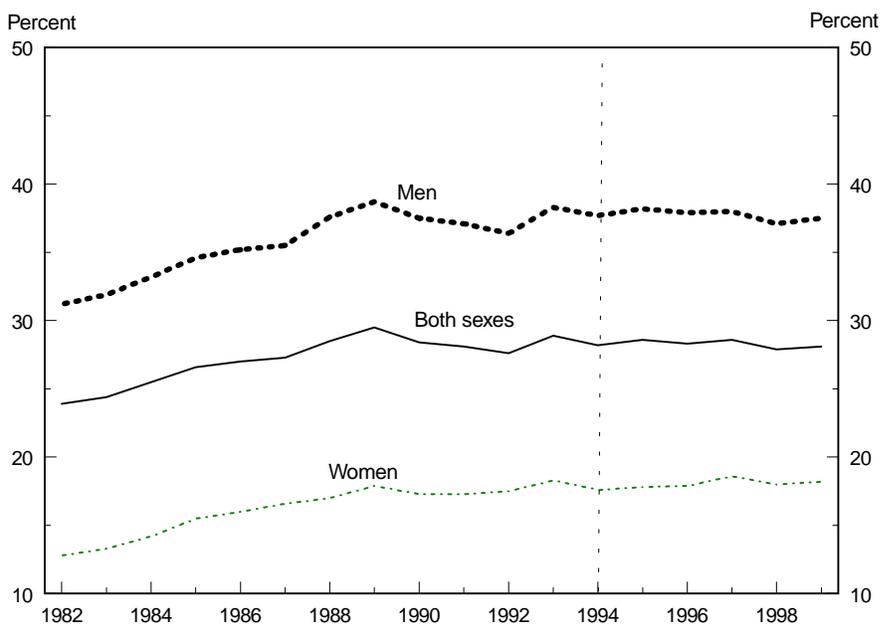
0.2 hour to 42.1 hours by 1999, compared with the actual change of 0.1 hour.

The hours series presented here are for all managerial and professional workers, both full and part-time, but the hours trends for those who usually work full time show very little change, as well.

Stable weekly work hours are not necessarily incompatible with the *perception* of busier schedules among managers and professionals. The perception could reflect changes in time spent on other activities (commuting, for example), more intense pressure during work hours, the increased workload of one's spouse, or other factors.

For additional information on hours at work and a technical description of the Current Population Survey from which the data used in this report were derived, contact Randy E. Ilg, Office of Employment and Unemploy-

The share of managers and professionals working 49 hours or more per week



NOTE: Data for 1994 and later years are not directly comparable with data for 1993 and earlier years, because of the introduction of a major redesign of the CPS questionnaire and collection methodology.

¹ The source of these data is the Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly sample survey of about 50,000 households. (The current occupational classification system used in the CPS has been in effect since 1982.)

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Average weekly hours at work for executive, administrative, and managerial (managers) and professional specialty (professionals) occupations by sex, 1982–99

Year	Both sexes			Men			Women		
	Total	Managers	Profes- sionals	Total	Managers	Profes- sionals	Total	Managers	Profes- sionals
1982	41.2	43.6	39.0	44.0	45.3	42.6	36.8	40.0	34.9
1983	41.4	43.6	39.5	44.1	45.2	42.9	37.3	40.1	35.7
1984	41.8	44.0	39.9	44.6	45.7	43.3	37.8	40.5	36.0
1985	42.0	44.2	40.0	44.8	46.0	43.4	38.1	40.8	36.2
1986	42.2	44.2	40.2	44.9	46.1	43.6	38.4	40.9	36.5
1987	41.9	44.0	39.9	44.7	45.9	43.3	38.3	40.8	36.4
1988	42.3	44.4	40.4	45.3	46.5	43.8	38.6	41.1	36.7
1989	42.6	44.6	40.6	45.5	46.6	44.2	38.9	41.4	36.9
1990	42.3	44.2	40.3	45.2	46.3	43.9	38.6	41.1	36.7
1991	42.2	44.1	40.2	45.0	46.2	43.7	38.7	41.1	36.8
1992	41.7	43.7	39.8	44.5	45.9	43.0	38.4	40.7	36.6
1993	42.2	44.3	40.2	45.1	46.6	43.5	38.8	41.1	37.1
1994	41.9	44.0	40.0	45.1	46.5	43.5	38.5	40.7	36.7
1995	42.0	44.0	40.1	45.2	46.4	43.7	38.5	40.7	36.8
1996	41.9	43.9	40.0	45.1	46.4	43.5	38.5	40.6	36.8
1997	42.1	44.0	40.2	45.2	46.5	43.6	38.8	40.8	37.1
1998	41.8	43.6	39.9	44.8	46.2	43.2	38.4	40.4	36.8
1999	42.0	43.9	40.2	45.1	46.4	43.5	38.8	40.7	37.3

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