Qual Sociol (2015) 38:235–259
DOI 10.1007/s11133-015-9309-0

Winding Down the Workday: Zoning the Evening Hours in Paris, Oslo, and San Francisco

Jeremy Markham Schulz[1]

Published online: 7 July 2015
© Springer Science+Business Media New York 2015

Abstract This article explores the subtle yet far-reaching ways that cultural environments shape the uses of the evening hours among business professionals in three countries. Drawing on interviews with professional men and women living and working in Paris, Oslo, and San Francisco from a spectrum of professional fields and employers, the article explores their evening routines. Three contrasting patterns are identified. Where the early evening hours between 17:00 and 21:00 are concerned, French, Norwegian, and American professionals traverse different cultural terrains. The French professionals and their employers treat this temporal zone as a status-conferring period. Adhering to a transorganizational cultural convention defining the early evening as work time, they use these hours to distinguish themselves as committed practioners of their *métier* equipped with status and authority. In Norway, comparable professionals approach this period as nonwork time off limits to their employer. Early departures from the office are encouraged and facilitated in the Norwegian workplace. Among the American professionals far less uniformity prevails among the evening routines of respondents working in different organizations and occupations. This variability is explained by the absence of the higher-level temporal conventions present in the two European contexts. In the American setting two deciding factors come into play: the temporal expectations of the professional's employer and the bargaining power wielded by the individual professional vis-à-vis this employer. These differences between the evening routines of the three groups reflect important cultural differences across countries with broadly similar postindustrial landscapes.

Keywords Work · Professionals · Cross-national sociology · Culture · Work-life nexus · Temporality

This study addresses the cultural conditions influencing the use of the evening hours by the professional classes. By joining together a cross-national research design with interview data, this article brings to light these elusive cultural patterns and influences as they are manifested in the

✉ Jeremy Markham Schulz
jmschulz@berkeley.edu

[1] University of California, Berkeley, CA, USA

evening routines of business professionals living and working in three different cultural environments: Paris, France; Oslo, Norway; and San Francisco, United States. The hours between 17:00 and 21:00 count as an important if underexamined segment of the daily round where working professionals typically make the transition between work life and private life. Applying a broad analytical lens, the analysis targets the understudied cultural factors responsible for shaping the work-life nexus, unearthing the connections between professionals' evening routines and temporal conventions operating at multiple levels of social structure. Venturing beyond individuals' life circumstances, occupation, and organizational affiliation, the analysis directs attention to the national cultural dimension of everyday life. The inquiry thus advances the frontier in work-life research, cross-national comparative sociology, and the sociology of time.

Temporal Zoning: Theorizing the Daily Round

Everyday routines can be regarded as particular zones of time or temporal territories assigned to particular activities and even identities. Stitched together over the 24-h cycle, these zones combine to form the individual's "daily round." This recurring cycle serves as the temporal scaffolding for much of everyday life and takes the individual through a sequence of activities and roles (Lewis and Weigert 1981, 439). For an individual who splits time between work and private life, the daily round typically involves shifts between different experiential realms defined by distinctive sets of persons, artifacts, social relations, and modes of thought and being (Nippert-Eng 1995; Zeruvabel 1981). While some temporal zones may be designated as free areas where the working individual is authorized to engage in discretionary and self-directed activities, other zones are dedicated to work tasks, family-related tasks, and other obligated tasks. These zoning practices orchestrate involvements with the compulsory activities of working life, the "obligated" activities of family life, and the "elective" activities of personal life and leisure (Zeruvabel 1981).

For many, transitions between these distinct zones occur on a daily basis. One of the most significant transitions is the shift from the temporal zone defined as working time to the zone defined as nonwork time. For those individuals who work standard schedules, this displacement from the public world of work to the private world of home, family, and leisure often takes place between 17:00 and 21:00 h, a transitional slice of clock time which spans the boundary between the work world and the world of private life (Adam 1995; Melbin 1987).

Prior theoretical work on the daily round suggests that daily temporal zoning practices reflect processes taking place at multiple levels of social organization. Because of the embedding of lower-level forms of social time in higher-level forms of social time, daily routines are partially nested in higher-level organizational timetables and even broader cultural macro-temporal conventions about the appropriate use of time (Lewis and Weigert 1981). Given the stratified character of these orders, higher-level cultural temporal orders constrain lower-level temporal orders at the level of the organization, the group, and the individual.

These constraints surface in a particularly visible way for members of formal organizations who find themselves subject to an organizational "temporal regime" instituted in the workplace through both formal and informal means (Melbin 1987). Formal organizations are replete with timetables and schedules (Sabelis 2007; Zeruvabel 1981). In Mertonian terms, those who labor in organizational settings confront temporal conventions prescribing particular "socially expected durations" (Merton 1984; Tabboni 2001) for the routine workday within their organization or branch. These expected durations are institutionalized, internalized, and sometimes resisted by organizational members across a wide variety of organizational contexts.

Professionals and the Evening Hours

Though organizationally embedded employees are subject to fixed temporal regimes, organizationally embedded professionals exercise a degree of temporal "agency" (Flaherty 2011) exercised in regards to duration, timing, and other aspects of the temporal process. For many professionals, these expected durations are often left open ended. Unlike employees whose workdays occur in a fixed location and conclude at a specific clock hour, relatively autonomous professionals typically enjoy some degree of control in deciding when to conclude their workday and usher in the nonwork part of the daily round. In other words, professionals typically maintain some measure of discretion over what Flaherty calls "timing," the decision to assign certain activities to certain clock times (Flaherty 2011, 82–92).

For those relatively autonomous professionals who can choose not only when to do certain tasks but where to do them, choices about the timing of work and nonwork tasks are linked together with choices regarding the location of these activities. When professionals exercise locational autonomy, decisions must be made about if and when to engage in "cross-realm" work in another location outside the workplace (Nippert-Eng 1995). Faced with the option of cross-realm working, these professionals may find it necessary to demarcate their workplace workday from other segments of the workday that take place in other settings, such as their homes. When the individual engages in "home-work" (Gregg 2011) and other forms of cross-realm work after business hours are over, work often overflows the boundaries of the office environment. In this situation, the professional spends only part of the workday in the workplace; the rest of the work is undertaken outside the temporal and physical boundaries typically delimiting the work realm. Where evening transitions are concerned, temporally and locationally autonomous professionals make for theoretically interesting cases well worth intensive examination. As professionals are especially likely to exercise such autonomy, they serve as the empirical cases for this study of evening zoning practices.

Extending the workday into the evening hours is not uncommon in the world of the organizationally embedded professional. Many such professionals prolong the traditional eight-hour workday such that it lasts until 18:00, 19:00, or 20:00 in the evening, intruding on what many consider "dinner hours" (DeVault 1991). It is well known that many professionals feel compelled to work late hours in order to outshine their peers and achieve recognition as constantly available "star performers" (Cooper 2000; Halrynjo 2007; Halrynjo and Lyng 2009; Shih 2004; Sharone 2004). This is particularly true of professionals working in organizations promoting what some have dubbed a "cult" of "extreme work" (Hewlett and Luce 2007; Hochschild 1997). The lure of this cult is particularly noticeable in the case of "high commitment organizations" such as finance firms, law firms, consulting firms, and engineering firms. In such firms, continuous availability for work can be the price of a successful career (Blair-Loy 2003; Cousin 2004; Epstein 1999; Halrynjo 2007), even if it requires sacrificing family time or private time during the hours between 17:00 and 21:00. In one recent study of American consultants, many professionals reported working through dinner hours, on weekends, and practically any time of day or night in order to distinguish themselves and advance in the organization (Reid 2015). In such cases the directive to work long hours is self-imposed by the professionals themselves in response to organizational expectations which leave no room for any competing activities or priorities outside work.

Both occupational and organizational context, as well as individual-level attributes such as gender and family status, enter into shaping the work schedules and evening routines of any given professional (Clawson and Gerstel 2014). Organizational location and rank matters for work scheduling in general and evening hours routines in particular. Hochschild (1997) for

example, notes that those at the top of the organization tend to work longer hours than those in the middle ranks. At the same time, professionals' age, gender, career stage, marital status, and parenting status have all been shown to influence stances towards working long hours and potentially spending evening hours in the workplace or working from home (Bailyn 1993; Bartolomé and Evans 1979; Blair-Loy and Jacobs 2003). Nonparenting professionals, for example, will likely dispose of the evening hours in a different way than their parenting counterparts, even if they hold the same job for the same employer.

While the individual-level and organizational-level determinants of professionals' evening work routines are well documented and well understood, the role of macro-cultural conventions remains unclear. One reason is that the vast majority of studies regarding the work lives of professionals focus on individuals working for an employer based in a single country. However, the handful of cross-national studies dealing with the work lives and private lives of professionals suggests that macro-cultural environments can and often do make a difference in the work schedules of professionals working for organizational employers. The influence of cultural context on work schedules is readily apparent, for example, in Poster and Prasad's (2005) comparison of technology professionals in India and the US; Wharton and Blair-Loy's (2002) survey of finance professionals in the US, the UK, and Hong Kong; and Perlow's (2001) interviews with software engineers working in China, India, and Hungary. Recent research suggests that the level of "gender empowerment" within a country has consequences for experiences of spillovers between the work and nonwork realms, independent of employees' individual-level circumstances (Ruppanner and Huffman 2013). Thus, though these studies speak to the scheduling parameters of the workday rather than the evening hours, they underline the key role of cultural context where professionals' daily rounds are concerned.

Evening Routines and the Daily Round in Trinational Perspective

France, Norway, and the United States make for a promising three-way comparison for this study of evening routines and zoning practices. By juxtaposing professionals across these three countries, we can grasp the ways in which distinctive cultural environments influence the work-life nexus in general and evening routines in particular.

On a macro-level it is clear that France, Norway, and the United States present all workers with somewhat different working time regimes (Gershuny 2000; Gershuny and Sullivan 2003). Cross-national surveys undertaken during the last decade have revealed striking gaps in the prevalence of long workdays and long workweeks across national workforces. Statistics from the International Labor Organization indicate that the proportion of long workweeks (defined as average workweeks of at least 60 h per week) among American full-time employees vastly exceeds the proportion of such workweeks among French and Norwegian workers (Lee et al. 2007). OECD 2006 data place Norway second to last in terms of average annual hours worked per worker (1424). France is positioned fifth from the bottom of the OECD distribution at 1484, slightly above Germany and Denmark. The annual work-hours average in the United States (1800 per worker) comes much closer to the average in Latin European countries such as Italy (1815) and Portugal (1783) than the averages for Northern European nations. In terms of the incidence of long-hours work within the workforce, only the British workforce resembles the American workforce.

The gap between the English-speaking countries and continental European countries such as Germany and France is well documented in the work-hours literature (Alesina et al. 2005;

Jacobs and Gerson 2004; Medalia and Jacobs 2008). Time use data has been used to show that European workers from several continental countries not only devote fewer hours to work than the modal American worker, but confine more of their paid work to weekdays and core business hours (i.e., 8 – 18:00) as opposed to evenings and weekends (Burda 2008).[1] Studies based on time diary data, for instance, have also found that nighttime work in the US (work carried out between 22:00 and 18:00) far eclipses nighttime work in Western European countries, due to the higher incidence of off-peak schedules for blue-collar workers (Hamermesh and Stancanelli 2014). It appears that such gaps in working time patterns among the American, Western European, and Scandinavian workforces are persisting and even widening.

These cross-national differences manifest themselves not only across the entire workforces of each country, but also surface when the comparison contrasts the managerial workforces in various countries.[2] For example, in a 2006 study of comparable managers at French and American manufacturing firms, Bloom finds that, once sick days and holidays are factored into the average workweek, the typical French manufacturing firm manager logs only 68 % of the hours logged by the typical American manager. The bulk of this work-hours gap is due to the greater number of holidays and sick leaves taken by the French managers rather than shorter workdays (Bloom et al. 2009, 20).

Traces of differing institutional architectures can be discerned in the work-hour patterns within the entire workforces of the three countries. Indeed, the very designation *cadre* is itself distinctively French, and has no exact equivalent in the English language. The French designation *cadre* is an occupational classification that confers certain legally codified rights and privileges usually associated with managerial or administrative authority within an organization such as a private-sector firm. However, this designation may also be acquired through certain educational credentials or “une formation supérieure.” While all *cadres* may lay claim to an elevated socio-occupational identity, for the upper *cadres* or *cadres supérieurs*, the social dimension of the designation becomes even more salient. These upper *cadres* have typically attended one of the French Grande Écoles and thus earned a distinguished status recognized in all corners of French society (Gadea 2003). Of these upper *cadres*, only those classified as executives with command authority are exempt from the work hours statutes applying to less elevated *cadres*.

The official work hours of most French *cadres* are governed by a complex legal framework that combines statutory regulations with collective agreements between employers, unions, and branches of the government, as well as enterprise-specific provisions (Dupré and Lallement 2007; Lallement 2003). Where employed *cadres* are concerned, official work-hours ceilings are set by collective agreements between employer associations and employee associations, but cannot breach the 48-h statutory weekly limit. As of 2002, a substantial portion of the French *cadre* workforce still logged a minimum of 45 h during a typical workweek (Cousin 2004; Henni and Piotet 2004; Piotet 2007).[3] However, the upper *cadres*, even when employed in organizations, are

[1] Given these work hour patterns, countries like France and Sweden outpace the United States when it comes to the proportion of time awake consumed by nonwork activities (Viard 2002, 66).

[2] Like other management and economics scholars, Bloom defines a “manager” only in terms of his or her supervisory responsibility, rather than in terms of education, class status, or expertise or a combination of these attributes.

[3] Surveys of French *cadres* have established the existence of a substantial gulf between the average workweeks of typical *cadres* and the average workweeks of French workers (*ouvriers*), even though the Aubry II work-hours framework in 2000–1 is supposed to apply to both types of employees (see Cousin 2004).

generally treated as exempt from overtime rules which apply to less elevated white-collar counterparts and are not entitled to overtime payments.

Whereas the French regulatory framework treat *cadres* and upper *cadres* differently than other employees, the Norwegian Work Environment Act [*Arbeidsmiljøloven*] sets statutory weekly and daily work-hours ceilings which apply to all nonexecutive employees, including professional employees with substantial education. Such nonexecutive employees are eligible for overtime pay rates when they exceed the statutory maximum number of work hours. During the period of the study, the regulations stipulated that nonexecutive employees could not legally exceed 48 h on any given seven-day period over the span of the working year without explicit agreement between the employee and the employer. Employers who wish their employees to work overtime must apply for a special exemption from the Labor Inspection Authority and must justify their request as "exceptional." In most cases, they must also pay overtime rates to the employees. Unauthorized overtime work by employees is penalized through significant fines. Although there are some exceptions—mostly international firms that operate outside the country—the vast majority of Norwegian employers operate in accordance with these rules.

Given these institutional parameters, it is not surprising that, while long-hour workdays do occur with some frequency in particular organizations and fields (IT for example), the "overtime culture" that is so widespread in the United States is confined in Norway to small pockets of elite professionals in the upper echelons of companies (Ellingsæter 2009, 114). Even in Norwegian IT firms, so-called "extreme" workdays (Hewlett and Luce 2007) in excess of 60 h per week are not as ubiquitous as they are in comparable American IT firms (Cooper 2000; Sharone 2004). In a study of young Norwegian IT engineers, Aarseth (2007, 67) found that, even though they characterized their jobs as "not exactly an eight to four job," most of her respondents managed to hold their work hours down to a maximum of 45 h per week.

In the American case, salaried employees (compared to hourly workers) work in a more laissez-faire workplace. As the state does not regulate professionals' work hours in any fashion, they often find themselves working long and extreme workdays both in and outside the office. For example, over half the Chicago-based attorneys studied by Heinz worked more than 50 h a week on average (Heinz et al. 2005, 130–2). Between 2006 and 2008, some 38 % of American professional men and some 14 % of American professional women regularly logged workweeks exceeding 50 h per week (Williams and Boushey 2010, 53).

Other features of the institutional landscape beyond working-time regimes figure into the evening routines of employees across the occupational spectrum. For example, Norwegian, French, and American daycare arrangements for working parents confront parenting professionals with different constraints and opportunities relevant to their evening routines. In Oslo, the publicly funded and managed daycare facilities (*barnehager*) appeal to parenting professionals of both genders (Ellingsæter and Gulbrandsen 2007). These facilities normally close at 17:00, however, making it necessary for the primary parent to quit work prior to 17:00 in order to pick up their child. In Paris, the public (*crèches municipaux*) remain open an additional ninety minutes, until 18:30, allowing working parents more time in the office in the evening. The private daycare facilities in San Francisco tend to close around 17:30 or 18:00, but here, as in most American cities, parenting employees are much more reliant on private childcare services as compared with their counterparts in France or Scandinavian countries. Such private

childcare services tend to offer more temporal flexibility, giving working parents more decision-making power over their evening routines. These differing childcare arrangements impose differing opportunities and constraints relating to the evening routines of working parents who seek to combine paid employment and childrearing.

Where evening routines are concerned, cross-national differences in the phasing of the daily round appear in time diary data when we look at both mealtimes and the distribution of working hours across the modal workday.[4] Phasing, a concept introduced by Melbin (1987), captures the collective rhythms of the daily round. In late-phased societies (Melbin 1987), mealtimes generally take place later than in early-phased societies. As compared with the late nineteenth-century United States, for example, the twenty-first century United States can be described as more of a late-phased society, both in and outside the workplace, with more activities taking place during evenings and nighttime. Such collective phasing can vary greatly, even across societies that resemble each other along many dimensions. When France, Norway, and the United States are contrasted in terms of phasing, time use data reveal a pronounced discrepancy in the timing of evening mealtimes across the entire populations of the three countries. Whereas the French evening mealtime generally commences at 19:30 or later, the most popular mealtime in Norway is around 17:30. As the tempogram in Fig. 1 (on the next page) shows, in the United States the majority of evening meals are consumed around 18:30, roughly an hour later than in Norway.

As the tempogram in Fig. 2 (on the next page) illustrates, the three-way contrast among these countries also reveals different phase structures for the modal workday. These cross-national divergences are particularly stark when it comes to the clock hours between 17:00 and 21:00 h, which can encompass both work and private life. Regarding the beginning of the workplace exodus, the American workforce stands between the early-leaving Norwegian workforce and the late-staying French work-force. The Norwegian exodus from the office, an exodus of both managerial and clerical staff, begins early, around 15:00, and tails off around 17:00. The proportion of French managers still in the office falls off dramatically around 19:00. Thus, the proportion of French managers in the office at 17:00 almost equals the proportion in the office in the morning at 11:00, the peak hour for the managerial workforce. Finally, among the Americans the departure of both managerial and clerical staff begins around 15:30 but occurs somewhat more gradually than in the Norwegian case. The most popular time to be present for French managers is 11:00.

Among the Americans and the Norwegians, the proportion of managerial staff present in the office closely tracks the proportion of clerical staff in the office. [5] In these two countries, when it comes to their presence in the office, the gap between these two groups is relatively small. However, this is not the case in France. As the tempogram in Fig. 2 shows, a significantly larger proportion of French managers, relative to clerical staff, is present in the office from 15:00 until roughly 20:00. This indicates that evening work is stratified by

[4] Both tempograms were created from data contained in time diary studies from the BLS in the United States, INSEE in France, and the SSB in Norway. With respect to the Norwegian time diary data, I am grateful for assistance from Odd Frank Vaage of the SSB.

[5] It should be noted that the peak proportions differ for each country because of the different labor force participation rates in each country. The highest labor force participation rate (82 %) is found in Norway, while the lowest rate (65 %) is found in France.

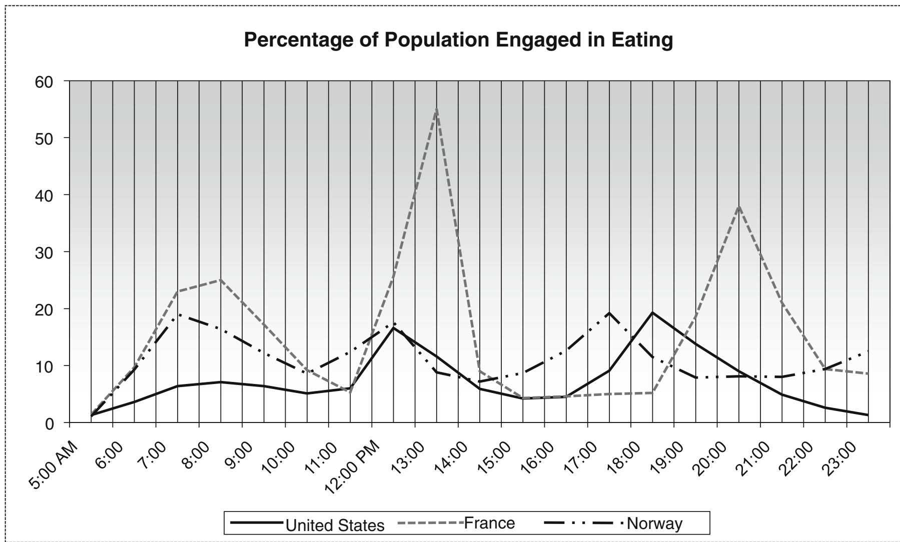

Fig. 1 Tempogram of modal mealtimes (France, Norway, United States)

occupation group in this context. At 19:00, the midpoint of this transitional part of the daily round, where the French clerical staff are concerned, four of ten are still present in the office. This proportion rises to six out of ten where the managers are concerned.

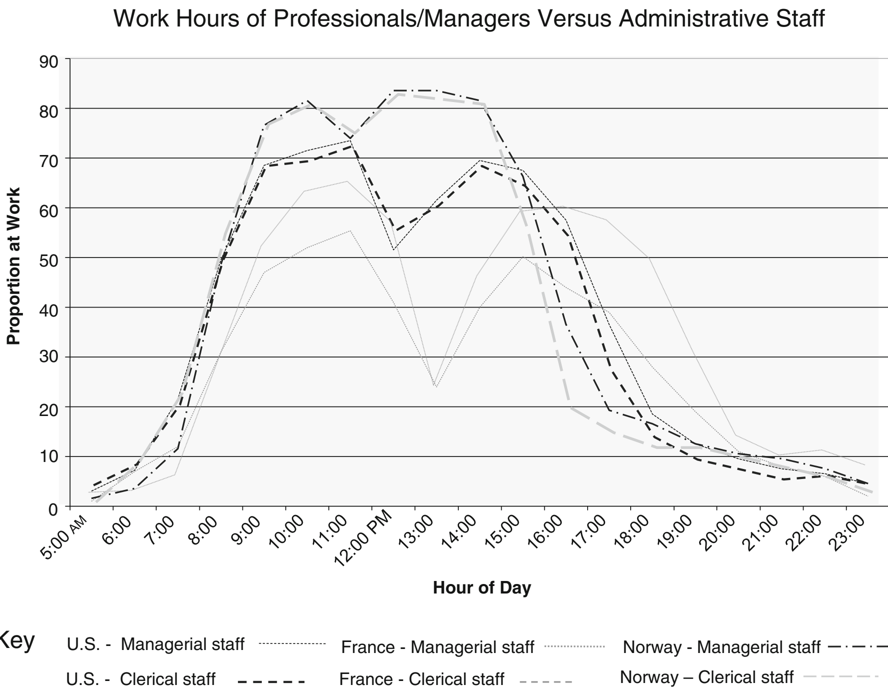

Fig. 2 Tempogram of modal work hours (France, Norway, United States)

Several conclusions can be drawn from this preliminary trinational comparison. First, the French managerial daily round and the typical evening zoning practices of French managers deviate from the phase structure of the American and Norwegian managerial daily round. The French workday is “late-phased” relative to the American and Norwegian workdays. Second, in the French context this phasing is stratified by occupational group. Across the entire French workforce, French managers tend to outstay their clerical coworkers. This class-based gap suggests that class-based temporal conventions may figure more prominently in France than in the other two countries.

The Study: Research Design and Data Collection

This study takes as its body of data first-person accounts of evening routines drawn from semi-structured interviews with 159 professional men and women. Those featured in this article are employed by a variety of corporate private-sector organizations located in Paris, Oslo, and San Francisco.[6] Each group comprises a minimum of fifty individuals in each city. The interviews analyzed here were carried out between 2003 and 2007 before the onset of the recent recessionary period (the present analysis does not include material from subsequent interviews conducted after this period). Members of each of these conational groups have been raised and educated in the country where the office is located; the French respondents have spent their formative years in France, the Norwegians in Norway, and the Americans in the United States.

Each of the three groups of respondents shares a similar profile in terms of its occupational, organizational, and gender composition. The three groups are composed solely of business professionals, and each group exhibits a similar mix of employing organizations and occupational affiliations among its members. This group-based matching strategy allows for inferences about the similarities and dissimilarities across the three groups. This comparability increases the likelihood that the three-way contrast will generate “revelatory” insights into the evening routines of professionals in each of the three cities (Maxwell 1996; Yin 1994).

Several occupations are represented in each group of conational professionals. In each of the three groups there are management consultants, banking and finance professionals (investment banking, accounting, and bank management), corporate attorneys, software designers, and professionals at engineering/industrial companies. The vast majority of the attorneys, consultants, and investment bankers within each group work in the kind of small nonhierarchical professional services firms renowned worldwide for their extreme work hours (sixty-plus hour workweeks are more common than not) (Perlow and Porter 2009). The software designers and engineering professionals, by contrast, work in larger, more bureaucratic organizations where professional employees average slightly lower work hours (with average workweeks between 45 and 55 h).

In addition to a diverse array of professional fields, each of the respondent groups includes substantial numbers of female professionals, both parenting and nonparenting professionals, and professionals of differing ages. While the younger respondents between the ages of twenty-six and thirty-four are in the midst of their hectic career launching years, the more experienced respondents have settled into the more sedate “establishment” phases of their careers (Bartolomé and Evans 1979) (Table 1).

[6] The data collection was undertaken as part of a larger project examining the impact of European and American cultural conventions on the work lives and private lives of comparable French, Norwegian, and American professionals.

Table 1 Respondent table

Location	Gender: male	Gender: female	Launching phase of career	Establishment phase of career	Age: 30 years of age or older	Parental status: child 9 years of age or younger
Number & percentage of respondents						
Paris (n=52)	32 of 52 (62 %)	20 of 52 (38 %)	25 of 52 (47 %)	27 of 52 (53 %)	35 of 52 (68 %)	18 of 52 (35 %)
Oslo (n=54)	32 of 54 (60 %)	22 of 54 (40 %)	28 of 54 (51 %)	26 of 54 (49 %)	37 of 54 (68 %)	20 of 54 (37 %)
San Francisco (n=53)	34 of 53 (65 %)	19 of 53 (35 %)	25 of 53 (48 %)	28 of 53 (52 %)	36 of 53 (68 %)	17 of 53 (32 %)
All three sites (n=159)	98 of 159 (62 %)	61 of 159 (38 %)	78 of 159 (49 %)	81 of 159 (51 %)	108 of 159 (68 %)	64 of 159 (35 %)

This biographical diversity ensures a variety of life circumstances and life contexts within each group sufficient to license inferences about the effects of causal influences operating at multiple levels of social organization. The occupational, organizational, and sociodemographic diversity of each group maximizes the diversity of evening routines prevalent among working professional employees interviewed in each fieldsite.

In order to generate comparable respondent groups, it was necessary to combine several recruitment strategies. The multi-prong strategy used to identify and recruit respondents in each of the three fieldsites yielded three groups of respondents well suited to this three-way comparison. A recruitment campaign in which educational institutions served as conduits proved useful in identifying prospective respondents in consulting, finance, and accounting. The alumni departments of major business schools in the United States, France, and Norway played important gatekeeping roles in this campaign. Through the assistance of these departments, I made contact with a wide range of prospective interviewees in these fields, the vast majority of whom agreed to participate in the interviews. The complementary employer-based recruitment strategy played an especially valuable role in recruiting respondents working in the banking, consulting, legal, and engineering fields. Starting with prominent companies in each metropolitan area, I contacted HR offices and other gatekeeping divisions in order to gain access to prospective respondents. These companies' gatekeepers assisted me in identifying potential respondents, putting me in touch with a deep pool of prospective interviewees fitting my sociodemographic and occupational criteria. Finally, "snowball" procedures were used to recruit additional respondents. First-wave interviewees were invited to refer additional prospective respondents in their professional circles (Weiss 1994). This campaign worked very well, yielding a total of over fifty respondents in each fieldsite.

Since the respondents had extremely packed schedules, I typically conducted the interviews whenever and wherever the respondents preferred. A small subset of the interviews was conducted in respondents' offices and, on occasion, in respondents' homes, while most took place in public venues such as cafes, restaurants, and pubs. The interviews were digitally recorded with the consent of the respondent and then transcribed verbatim before coding and analysis.[7]

The interviews, which lasted between sixty minutes and ninety minutes apiece, covered a broad spectrum of themes relating to the organization of the daily round. The questions invited the respondent to detail his or her daily routine with special attention to the evening hours between 17:00 and 21:00. I also asked respondents to give me their work schedules for the last "typical" day they could recall. In addition, respondents answered open-ended questions about their strategies for winding down the workday and beginning the nonwork part of the daily round. They were also asked specifically about the early and late evening hours as periods for work activities (whether performed in the office or at home) and for activities connected with their private lives, whether relating to personal leisure or family life.

[7] My language training in Norwegian was undertaken with the aid of a FLAS grant as well as generous financial support from the American-Scandinavian Foundation allowing me to live in Norway and learn Norwegian. This immersive experience allowed me to acquire the language skills needed for the project. Many of the French interviews were conducted by myself and a French-speaking colleague in residence at the École Normale Supérieure acting as translator.

To analyze the data, I used a grounded approach calling for mutual dialogue between data and concepts (Alford 1998). In coding the interview data, I began with open coding of the transcript material (Strauss and Corbin 1998) to inductively generate analytic frames. Subsequently, I used multiple rounds of recoding to develop targeted codes. I then recoded the entire data set with these targeted codes, ensuring that the codes were properly grounded in the data (Luker 2009). This multistage coding process allowed me to: 1) group the respondents' evening routines into particular clusters distinguished by clearly defined properties and boundaries, 2) discern the extent to which these three patterns asserted themselves within and across the three groups of conationals, and 3) identify the ways in which each of these three routines was "accomplished" and how these accomplishments varied across and within each group of conationals.

Overview of Findings

This study concentrates on the evening routines characteristic of professional employees working at private-sector firms. Attending to their evening routines as well as the temporal conventions that they encounter in and outside the workplace, the study contrasts the evening routines of French, Norwegian, and American professional employees occupying a variety of positions across a range of organizations and occupations.

When we examine the general work scheduling patterns across the three groups of respondents, we find some variation in both the office workday and the total workday. The French respondents work the longest days, despite the fact that they take the longest lunch breaks. The Norwegians work somewhat shorter office workdays but close the gap somewhat on account of their longer telework stints at home, usually after dinner hours. The American respondents fall in between the two extremes. These patterns appear in the Table 2.

In the following sections, the paper employs the interview data to explore how each group of respondents disposes of the evening hours and divides them between the office workday, the telecommuting workday, and private life. Through this intensive examination of the professionals' evening routines, the contours of the professionals' evening zoning practices come into view. In addition, the qualitative study pins down the sources of these zoning practices in the temporal regimes of their employing organizations and the more elusive transorganizational temporal conventions.

Table 2 Work scheduling table

Location	Average duration of typical workday	Typical arrival time in office	Typical departure time from office	Average weekly hours of telework
Paris (*n*=52)	10.5 h	9:00–9:30	19:30–21:00	1.7 h
Oslo (*n*=54)	9.5 h	8:00–8:30	17:30–18:00	4 h
San Francisco (*n*=53)	10 h	8:30–9:00	18:00–19:00	3.2 h
All three sites (*n*=159)	10 h	8:00–9:30	18:00–21:00	3 h

The Evenings of the French Professionals

For the French professional belonging to the upper *cadres*, the hours between 17:00 and 21:00 hold a very special significance relative to the rest of the workday. These French respondents find it imperative to be present in the office until at least 19:30, even in the absence of pressing deadlines. It is during these pivotal hours that the French professionals demonstrate their authority in the workplace, hone their reputation, and commune with likeminded colleagues. They do so in an environment populated exclusively by their peers. In this context there is a strong taboo against quitting the office during the early part of this period, whether that means taking a time out from the office or concluding the workday altogether. Formal and informal meetings in which "high-level issues" are discussed among the "important people" often commence at or after 18:00 in the evening, and could easily last beyond 20:00. Professionals are loath to leave the office prior to 18:00 as they risk exclusion from these status-conferring interactions. The hours when family time and leisure time beckon most stridently are thus precisely the hours when the committed professional can earn his or her stripes by conspicuously investing in work.

For many French professionals, the tail end of the workday also offers special gratifications unavailable during the earlier parts of the workday. At this time the support staff has gone home, and the professionals can practice their *métier* in each other's company, undisturbed by the petty distractions that divert their attention during the earlier part of the workday. It is during these charmed hours that the French professionals are able to bond with their colleagues and bask in the cherished feelings of camaraderie. As the banking director Pascal observes:

> Really, from 17:30 to 20:30 in the evening is the best part [emphasis] of the working day. [At this time] the support staff have gone home, the clients have stopped calling… it's just us bankers. This is when we get our intellectual nourishment, when we get to spend time together in the office. I get more pleasure from the 17:30 to 20:30 h than during any other part of the workday. It's this special time because we all know why we're here. We all went through the same education and worked very hard to get here; that's why the *cinq à sept* [smiles] is the payoff. This is when we learn from each other and those above us in the hierarchy.

It's "just not appropriate," as one French investment banker declares, for a *cadre* to leave the office at 17:30 in the evening, whether merely to take a time-out from work or to leave his work until the next workday. As he says, "I don't want to have people working on my team who would leave the office at 17:30."

For the French professionals, the practice of working during the evenings serves to alert others within the organization to one's high status and authority. In the words of Philippe, "A lot of people here stay until 20:00 or 20:30…they could avoid working late if they were more efficient, but they do it to show that they are the top dog [c'est moi le plus fort]." "Tarrying in the hallways" is a common practice in Gustave's former consultancy among professionals during the evenings, even in the absence of pressing deadlines. It is during these evening hours that "important things get decided." Moreover, with the clerical staff gone for the day, it is during these hours that these *cadres* show each other who really counts in the organization and profession. The French professionals, whether they work most of the evening hours out of choice or felt necessity, perceive the bulk of the evening-hour period as fit for work and unfit for private life.

This temporal zoning practice comes across clearly in the interviews with the junior French professionals trying to make a name for themselves in their firms. When Pierre, a junior analyst

for a large French bank, is invited to imagine himself leaving for the day before 19:30, his normal departure time, he expresses a strong distaste for this evening routine. If he started quitting work before 19:00 he would not only harm his young career, but he would do something that would be "incredible" and simply "impossible" for a highly educated *cadre* such as himself. Outraged by the idea of leaving early, he declares, "You don't expect to leave at 16:30. It would be incredible [emphasis] to have a job with such hours…if I left work at 16:30, it would be half a workday [emphasis]." Laurent, a manager at a large French industrial firm, echoes Pierre, saying that he does not want to miss his "second shift," which begins at 17:00. Sandrine, a junior executive at a large French technology company, has been cautioned against leaving before 21:00 by her supervisors. Observing the comings and goings of people in her office, she has noticed that young *cadres* who dare to vacate the office before 20:30 end up signing their own "death warrants."

> [L]eaving early, that is really bad; it's like writing your own death warrant. If you leave at the end of the official working day, at 18:00, you won't be taken seriously, and you'll seem not to take your colleagues seriously. Once in a while, if you have a valid reason to leave, it becomes acceptable to leave at 19:30, and you shouldn't really be considering leaving before 20:30, and if you are new and trying to prove yourself as a competent *cadre*, you shouldn't really leave the office before 21:00.

For junior professionals launching their careers it can be particularly critical to stay late in the office to curry favor with superiors. Only in the case of compelling and unusual circumstances could a junior *cadre* be excused from staying until 19:00. For those trying to prove themselves in the company and move up in the ranks, the earliest one can depart the office and retain one's good name is 20:00.

However, not all of the French professionals gladly embrace the practice of extending the office workday into this temporal territory. While rare, it does happen that individuals defy the evening work imperative in the French workplaces under study. A number of the professionals—both men and women—complain somewhat bitterly about the pressure to linger in the office in the absence of pressing work. Émile, a male executive who had previously worked as an upper-level manager at a large Parisian consumer products firm, objects to the "stupid" practice of staying late in the office simply to be seen and "seem important":

> I work really fast, so I'm usually done by 19:00, but I still have to spend an extra hour afterwards simply because [my superior] Jean-Pascal still hasn't finished his work. There is enormous pressure to stay here until he leaves, so I sit around and write emails and keep myself as busy as possible until it's the right time to leave…it just seems stupid to me to waste my time staying in the office until 20:30 every night just to be with everyone else.

Aurélie assails the evening face time imperative in very much the same terms and excoriates her colleagues for their temporal profligacy in the evenings: "There is a way of working here—people work late at night to seem important and to seem as if they are working really hard. I think that is really stupid, really dumb."

In these workplaces professionals who disregard these temporal conventions pay a steep price. One respondent had witnessed the travails of a younger colleague who dared to habitually quit the office at 18:00 in direct defiance of the norms. After several weeks of this behavior, both junior and senior colleagues started harassing this "temporal renegade"

(Epstein 1999) by ridiculing and discrediting his behavior, asking him if he intended to take a "half-day off" whenever he packed up his bag before 19:00. The months of this low-grade teasing culminated in an upbraiding by the renegade's superior, who took him to task for his lack of "alignment" with the firm and his coworkers. This ugly scene led him to alter his evening routines to conform to the typical pattern.

The Evenings of the Norwegian Professionals

Unlike the French, for the Oslo-based professionals most of the early evening period is defined as personal time rather than status-conferring work time. Whether they conclude the workday altogether or use the early evening as a break from work, Norwegian professionals zone these hours as nonwork time. In the absence of pressing deadlines or unforeseen crises, the Oslo-based professionals (whether men or women, parenting or nonparenting, young or middle-aged) routinely quit the office at or before 18:00 in the evening.[8] Whereas the French professionals often take part in meetings stretching past 17:00, such evening meetings rarely take place in the Norwegians' workplaces. According to a Norwegian banker, it is "exceedingly rare" for the senior bankers to hold a consequential conversation or make any kind of decision after 18:00. This view is echoed by the software engineer Astrid:

> If there is something important to be decided, we would never have a discussion or meeting about it after 17:00 here. This would mean that people who had to leave at the normal hour couldn't participate. This situation wouldn't be very fair to them [emphasis].

Moreover, unlike their French counterparts, Norwegian professionals with supervisory responsibilities praise rather than sanction their subordinates for departing the office at 17:00 or even earlier. Not only does an early departure signal self-discipline and focus, in his view, but it also allows the worker to recharge after the workday's end.

It is very unusual for the Norwegian professionals to spend most of the hours between 17:00 to 21:00 in the office, whether or not they have young children. Even the nonparenting professionals of both genders take evident pride in their capacity to contain the workday and prevent it from ruining their evening hours and colonizing a vital part of their private lives.[9]

[8] It is not claimed that every Norwegian professional in every instance is entitled to leave the office at or before 17:30 whenever he or she pleases. As is evident from the Norwegian work-family literature (Halrynjo and Lyng 2009, 2010), there are circumstances under which it is very bad form to quit the office on the early side. However, when the Norwegians' evening routines are contrasted with the evening routines of their French and American counterparts, it is immediately apparent that *only* the Norwegians enjoy any kind of dispensation to treat the evening as nonwork time. This comes across particularly clearly with regard to attorneys and other professionals who work the longest workdays. Among these hard-driving workers, arriving at the office extremely early and/or working through the lunch hour (and at home during the late evening hours) are typically preferred tactics for coping with work overload. Working through the early evening hours is considered a last resort. The contrast between the evening zoning practices of the French and the Oslo-based professionals was explained to me by Emma, a Norwegian consultant who had transferred to the Paris office of a large consultancy after working in their Oslo office. Whereas Emma feels free to leave the office by 18:00 or 19:00 in Oslo (a late departure by Oslo standards), in the Paris office she cannot leave so early without risking the ire of supervisors and colleagues who typically toil deeper into the evening.

[9] In the view of the Norwegian professionals interviewed for the study, the early-leaving routine was widespread within the working classes as well as the professional classes. Indeed, the Norwegian respondents claimed that they were adhering to a characteristically "Norwegian" or "Scandinavian" approach to work hours, an approach embraced by working people all across the Norwegian class system. Such claims did not come from the lips of either the French or the American respondents.

When one of the nonparenting respondents, the banking associate Torvald, succeeds in finishing up all of his work tasks by 17:30, he can be certain that that he is working "effective hours" and not wasting his precious time. The nonparenting bank manager Henrik also extols the practice of ending the workday early and taking off the evening. With evident pride he declares that, "I leave at 17:30 and work efficiently all day because I don't want to stay in the office until 19:00… my evenings are too important to waste on work." Like other Norwegian professionals, he touts his tactic of "setting limits" [*grensesetting*] as a sign that he is capable of organizing his workday in an efficient manner and making his "precious" evenings off limits to work. Merethe, a nonparenting professional who works for a large Oslo-based energy company, also quits the office around 17:30 and seldom picks up again unless a deadline is imminent. In her interview Merethe declares that she has been "focused on getting home at an early hour" for a long time, as she enjoys spending her free evenings with friends or playing basketball. As a result of committing herself to leaving the workplace by 17:30, Merethe works "extremely industriously" [*kjempeflittig*] during regular work hours. She considers the practice of ending the workday early as a sign of admirable self-discipline and does not think highly of the people who "believe they can stay in the office as long as they want and work as slowly as they want because they know they'll be in the office all evening." Many of her colleagues, both parenting and nonparenting, conform to the same routine, even if they do not participate in organized leisure activities that force them to adhere to a regular schedule.

Thus, this cultural dispensation to leave the office relatively early stems from a generalized ethos embraced widely within the workplace and among professionals. The ethos best described as "work should stay in its place" is evident both in and outside the Norwegian workplace and blunts organizational pressures towards the prolongation of the office workday. However, because of this dispensation, when crunch time does hit, the Norwegian professional is likely to spend the late evening hours at home huddled in front of his company laptop long after his French counterparts have left the workday and the office behind. This is especially common among parenting professionals with younger children at home. To a greater extent than their French counterparts, these Norwegian professionals often find themselves clicking away at the kitchen table between 21:00 and midnight.

The expectations around the early evening are often described as specifically Norwegian or at least Scandinavian. As the engineering manager Svein clarifies, an early conclusion to the workday distinguishes "the general Norwegian working rhythm" from the working rhythm in other parts of the world. In the view of a technical consultant who shifted from an international firm to a Norwegian company, the higher incidence of early departures in his new office is due to the greater acceptance of "more Norwegian working habits" at his new firm. Sven, a corporate attorney in an Oslo-based firm, distinguishes the "typically Norwegian" practice of "going home early unless there is a good reason to stay in the office" from the prevailing practices evident in workplaces outside of Norway. In his view, the workdays in Britain, France, and the US tend to stretch more into the evening for two primary reasons. As he explains:

> In Norway, you can go home before your boss, while in some countries, like the UK and the US, you can't go home before the boss goes home, even if you have nothing left to do. In these countries you spend a lot of time during the workday chatting with people and so you lose all this time during the day. Then you have to spend the evening in the office.

Like Sven and other Norwegian professionals, the manager Magnus has great faith in the "Scandinavian model" of the workday. As Magnus points out, "I need people [working for me] who have a surplus of energy" by "spending some time away from work." In his view this

model makes sense even for the most “ambitious and motivated” professionals and the most “demanding” organizations.

Those exceptional Norwegian professionals who dare to spend the majority of the early evening hours in the office encounter vocal expressions of disapproval from their coworkers and colleagues. Olav, a young Norwegian professional who routinely outworked his mostly older colleagues, had to field repeated inquiries into his personal life by concerned colleagues, even though it was known that he did not have any children living at home. Before leaving him at 16:30 to work alone in the office into the evening, his colleagues would interrogate him about what he planned to do for dinner. He wearied of responding to colleagues who impugned his private life, asking him repeatedly whether he intended to eat dinner with his wife. On a number of occasions, Olav had also heard from his superior that it wasn’t “necessary” for him to stay late. Twice the superior had warned, as his coworkers were leaving, “You’d better get home too.” Olav learned to pay lip service to this convention, saying, “I’ll be sure to finish up quickly,” as the magic hour approached, even when he had every intention of staying late. It was enough to play along with the conventions and appear to conform.

Lisbeth, another evening deviant, invested herself in work much more than her colleagues, and regularly stayed past 19:00, even during calm periods. As a result, she also found herself subjected to criticism by a vigilant boss who faulted her for misspending her evenings. He routinely took her to task for staying “too late” in the absence of any pressing deadlines. For a two-month long stretch he had chided her repeatedly with comments such as: “Why are you sticking around here so late—go and get a private life, for God’s sake!” After enduring these admonishments, Lisbeth decided to appease her boss. She managed to smooth things over by deferring to the early evening conventions so compelling to her coworkers and her boss. Even after this capitulation, however, she often sneaked in some work during evenings spent at home.

The Evenings of the American Professionals

Because of the substantial uniformity across individuals and employers, it is easy to spy the divergent conventions governing the French and Norwegian professionals’ evening zoning practices. In the American case, however, much more variability characterizes the professionals’ evening routines. Whereas the French and Norwegians grapple with temporal conventions operative across many employers and industries, the American professionals encounter a spectrum of organizations with distinctive temporal regimes. For the Americans, evening routines hinge on the type of workplace they join; some workplaces are more open to early departures before 18:00, while others are distinctly hostile to this practice. The difference between such workplaces is apparent to the American respondents as the distinction between “relaxed” workplaces and “hard-driving” workplaces. As one American accountant puts it, “As far as evenings go, you can find companies where they expect different things, so you always want to know where they stand. If you choose a place where you’re supposed to stay late, then you’d better do it. When in Rome…”

Many of the Americans work for hard-driving organizations that demand long workdays typically stretching past 18:30, sometimes to 19:30 or 20:00. This group is concentrated in consultancies and investment banks, along with certain technology companies. Marsha, a former consultant who joined an elite strategy department within a technology company, reports that the “expected departure time” at her firm is between “seven and seven-thirty” and that she only dares to “sneak out” before this time on Fridays. These hours do not faze her,

however, as she has become accustomed to extended workdays at her consulting job. She considers the evening work stints the "price of being in a cutting-edge company where there's always more stuff to be done." Unlike their French counterparts, the late-working Americans do not treat the evening hours as particularly valuable temporal terrain within the larger territory of the workday. Nor do they perceive these hours as indispensable for the purpose of practicing their craft or asserting their status.

Because they have worked in a variety of workplaces, some of the American professionals have firsthand experience with both types of workplaces. For example, Carlton had firsthand experience working for employers with distinctive approaches to the early-evening hours. In his current position as a vice president at the San Francisco office of a global investment-banking firm, Carlton never leaves earlier than 19:30. Earlier departures would trigger unwelcome questions about his commitment from his peers and supervisors. Anyone at his level at his firm who tries to leave before seven o'clock in the evening must marshal a "watertight" set of excuses. The firm's partners, on the prowl for "slackers" absent from their posts, would instantly raise the alarm if they noticed someone "AWOL before seven p.m." In forming an impression of his current firm's hours culture, Carlton recalls the atmosphere at his previous employer, a large industrial company in the Midwest. Unlike Carlton's current employer, this industrial company did not seek to colonize the early evening hours, leaving employees free to depart early. Here the "joke was that you could shoot a cannon down the corridor at 17:00 and not hit anyone."

As for the American professionals who routinely leave on the early side, they are typically either working at a less demanding organization or enjoy substantial bargaining power vis-à-vis their boss and employer. Those who work at less demanding organizations considered their future evening routines in choosing an employer, taking firms' temporal regimes into account in their job searches. These Americans avoid applying for jobs in companies known as "late hours" workplaces. Looking back on his job search, Rick, a corporate attorney, recounts:

> When I was thinking about the kind of places where I wanted to work, I gave some thought to the kinds of work hours they expected. I was particularly concerned about the expectations for the evenings. I knew that some places really wanted you to stay until seven o'clock while others didn't mind if you left at five as long as you were on top of your stuff.

Keenly aware of this aspect of the workplace culture, these American professionals approach their employer's willingness to countenance early departures as a crucial selling point. Nadia, a manager at a Bay Area technology company, sought out a firm which would permit her to routinely leave before 18:00 in the evening:

> People don't work very late in the evening here…you can usually leave by 5:30… and that's one thing I was looking for sure out of business school…I knew that work wouldn't be my number one priority and I wanted to find a company where that would be fine.

As she consciously chose an employer with a temporal regime friendly to free evenings, it was no accident that she wound up working for this firm.

Bob, an engineering manager employed by a San Francisco based software company, has little problem leaving the office at 17:30 during the early phases of project cycles without irking his coworkers or colleagues. Bob feels that this habit does not endanger his career

prospects at all. His employer is unusually "forgiving" relative both to the industry and other firms in the San Francisco Bay Area. In Bob's experience, very few other organizations in his industry would look the other way if someone in his position regularly quit the office before 19:30. As he says, "If I were at a different company [in this industry], I would have to work this late, whether I liked it or not." As a result, his evenings would look "very different" than the leisured evenings he currently enjoys at his "relaxed" company.

For the Americans employed by these less demanding organizations, the occasional evening work stint at the office occurs only as a result of unusually heavy workloads. On the occasions when they stay past 18:00, these Americans can be found in their offices beavering away on pressing tasks. As the accountant Terry explains:

> Just like everyone else here, I only spend the evenings in the office when the workload is super intense. And during the intense times there is always something to keep me here in the evening. But I wouldn't be staying late if it weren't for the workload.

Like the other early-leaving Americans who cope with excessive workloads by extending the workday, Terry does not look forward to working through the evening hours and does so only to avoid even more disagreeable encroachments on his personal time. For him, as for the other American professionals working in such firms, there is nothing special about the early evening as a temporal territory potentially allocated to work. There is also no status dividend to be gained by putting in face time after 17:00.

Some of the higher-ranking American respondents who work for hard-driving late-hours organizations nevertheless defy the local organizational culture and regularly leave the office before 19:00 or even 18:00. For these Americans, the dispensation to depart early can be secured through negotiation, provided the individual wields sufficient bargaining power vis-à-vis his or her boss and employer. Charles, a top-ranking executive at a high-tech company, has made a habit of quitting his workplace between 17:30 and 18:00 to spend the evenings with his wife and infant son at home. However, his firm exhibits a "late hours culture" and overflows with young unattached "twenty-something" men without "anything better to do" than stick around in the office well into the evenings. Fortunately, he has "paid his dues" and ascended to a position within the firm where enjoys the right to leave the office on the early side. Even so, he must often resort to subterfuge in order to escape the office before 19:00 without being corralled by his overeager underlings. At 17:30, Charles often finds himself giving his subordinates the slip by pretending to "go to the bathroom." More frequently than not he succeeds in this endeavor, escaping the office unnoticed. Like several other Americans at his rank, Charles feels privileged to be able to deviate from the late-hours regime of his employer, something no junior professional employee could afford to do without paying a steep professional price.

Tyler, a senior marketing executive at a young high-tech company headquartered outside San Francisco, routinely departs from his workplace between 16:00 and 16:30, roughly 2 h before typical quitting time. He is particularly eager to leave before the evening rush hour when it is his turn to pick up his young daughter from her daycare center, a thirty to forty minute drive away from San Francisco. Despite his regular evening truancy, Tyler is confident that he will not get "smacked" by his superiors for his early departures. His superiors are well aware that he does a two-hour shift in the early morning to get a head start on the workday, before regular business hours, working at home on his laptop between 5:30 and 7:30 in the morning. His early-morning temporal heroics and his stellar professional reputation in and outside the firm help to insulate him from potential "pushback" around his early departures from the office. The key importance of his standing in the firm hit home one day when he

overheard an illuminating exchange between a senior executive and some "newbies" who were begging to leave the workplace early. When these junior employees asked if they could leave at 16:00 to attend a sports match, their incredulous boss "pulled down their pants," tartly rejecting their request. When they protested that some of the senior executives left at this hour, their boss responded, "I don't know what kind of fancy job those guys have, but that's not how we work on my team." For Tyler this exchange confirmed that he could get away with early departures only because of his senior status, reputation for outstanding work, and demonstrated commitment to the firm—as evidenced by his early morning work stints.

At the broadest level, the San Francisco case stands in sharp contrast to both the Paris and Oslo cases because of the lack of transorganizational temporal conventions operative in the American setting. In San Francisco the professionals working in the most demanding organizations or for the most demanding bosses and teams find themselves laboring until 19:00 or later in their offices; their counterparts working for less demanding organizations feel free to end their office workdays earlier. The lack of strong higher-level conventions means that, for any given American professional, the employing organization has a free hand in setting the parameters for the evening hours, as it is operating in what amounts to a macro-cultural vacuum as far as temporal conventions are concerned. In the absence of encompassing cultural temporal conventions, for those Americans who wish to leave their office on the early side and who wield sufficient bargaining power to fend off the demands of the organization, the primary recourse involves individualized negotiation and bargaining. Thus, in the American workplace, the professional with the most bargaining power possesses the most time sovereignty (Glorieux et al. 2008; Lewis and Weigert 1981) relative to his or her employer's temporal regime.

Discussion and Conclusions

In Paris and Oslo, cultural temporal conventions exert relatively strong and uniform pressures on both the employing organization and the individual professional employee. In the French and Norwegian cases, the professionals' evening routines are informed by culturally grounded macro-temporal structures which extend beyond the respondents' personal circumstances and the specific interactional and organizational contexts of their work lives and private lives.

Among the French professionals, strong culturally based temporal structures are inscribed in the organizational timetables of their employers, defining the early evening hours as status-conferring work time. These cultural temporal conventions, which require that the professional mobilizes most of the evening hours for work and spends most of this time in the office, often appear inscribed in the evening zoning practices of the individual professional himself or herself. In the French context, cultural temporal conventions relating to the evening hours inform the organizational timetables of employers as well as the zoning practices of individual professional men and women. The French mandate to spend the evenings in the workplace finds its source in the distinction-bearing character of work "overinvestment" (Lallement 2003) among the French *cadres*, particularly the higher-level upper cadres or *cadres supérieure.* The uniquely French social formation of the *cadre* constitutes both a social order or rank and a public occupational category akin to a military officer (Boltanski 1982; Gadea 2003). It is an institutionally codified socioprofessional group. For the elevated men and women belonging to this group, it is critical to make one's presence known in the office during the early evening hours. It is by rendering themselves as socially visible to peers, subordinates, and superiors during these liminal and transitional hours that they dramatize and demonstrate their social honor.

In addition, the evening zoning practices of the French respondents must be understood in relation to the characteristically French "ideology of the *métier*" (D'Iribarne 1989, 2006, 98). Though the cultural template of the *métier* has its historical roots in the French feudal system, where irrevocable ties of subordination and superordination bind together superiors and inferiors through particularistic relationships, it has not yielded to the homogenizing pressures of global competition even in the twenty-first century (Dupuy 2005). Even in today's France, individuals still associate their *métier* with their rank in society at large (D'Iribarne 1989, 2006, 45–49). Those who perform their *métier* well and make themselves worthy of the status of *cadre* acquire a characteristically French form of social currency, namely personal honor and status (D'Iribarne 2006, 2009). By working conspicuously during the evening hours, these highly-ranked men and women affirm their worthiness as members of this social order which transcends any specific occupational or organizational affiliation.

In the much more egalitarian Norwegian context we find a setting suffused with a very different cultural temporal convention. Just as strong and uniform as the convention prevailing in the French contexts, the Norwegian temporal convention applies to the workforce as a whole. Where the French convention mandates late-ending workdays for those with an elevated *métier*, the Norwegian convention empowers all workers, including professionals and others staking out more remunerative and high-status corners of the labor market, to carve out personal time in the early evening for themselves and their significant others. Here, the prevailing temporal convention is supported by institutional foundations such as overtime regulations and kindergarten opening hours. It licenses an early departure from the office on the part of professionals of both genders and across the spectrum of family status. For the professionals who internalize this convention, the early evening hours acquire a special status as a protected temporal zone inappropriate for work under normal circumstances. Indeed, the habit of finishing one's tasks at an early hour signifies a valued kind of efficiency, a worthy object of striving. In explaining this pattern from a cultural perspective it is important to appreciate the idealization of private life in Norway as the life sphere where people lead the most meaningful parts of their lives. It is in private life, as the anthropologist Marianne Gullestad has argued in her close study of everyday life in Norway, where personal relationships embodying the quasi-sacred element of closeness [*nærhet*] and togetherness [*felleskap*] can blossom (Gullestad 1992, 53–5, 81–2). But this cult of togetherness does not shield the entire evening from work; rather, it protects the early evening hours—especially those hours involving interactions with friends or family members—the temporal zone best suited for private life.

When we reexamine the American case in light of the European cases, it becomes clear that the Americans' evening routines materialize under distinctive cultural conditions relating to work and employment. Where a more communalist vision prevails in Norway, and the cultural template of the *métier* remains alive and well in the French workplace, it is a contractualist vision which predominates in American workplaces and American society at large. Thus, the American respondents approach their evening stints, especially when they involve quitting the office early, as quasi-contractual arrangements specific to their employing organizations and the expectations of their bosses and coworkers. Such arrangements inevitably vary across workplaces and even across teams and departments within a single workplace.

In the American setting these micro-level and meso-level temporal orders remain relatively localized, varying according to professional reputation, employment setting, and life circumstances. For Americans, engagements with employers, coworkers, and bosses are structured by a fundamentally distinct cultural template, a template which d'Iribarne and others term "contractualism" (Fischer 2008; D'Iribarne 1989, 2006, 2009). This template models

employment and work relations on contracts between juridically equal owners of property. Once someone enters into a contract with an employer, he or she has freely relinquished whatever rights and privileges he or she enjoyed prior to the contract. Inasmuch as he or she is bound by the contract where the temporal duration of work time is concerned, the boss "has the final word" on working hours (D'Iribarne 2009, 313). Because of this contractual vision of work relations, the employing organization maintains the formal right to subject the professional to whatever temporal expectations it pleases unconstrained by higher-level cultural strictures. The job of the employee is to adapt to the inflexible elements of the "time cage" instituted by the employer (Moen et al. 2013). Should the individual professional wish to leave on the early side in defiance of the firm's temporal regime, he or she must be valuable enough to the employer that he or she can essentially extract a personal concession or he or she must be able to "pass" as properly dedicated (Reid 2015). In the American context, then, cultural conventions revolving around, rank, *métier*, or private life do not enter into what amounts to a bilateral bargain struck by the professional and his or her boss and employer. The variability in the Americans' appropriation of the evening hours demonstrates the impact of culturally constituting work schedules as exclusively private arrangements.

Implications of the Trinational Comparison

This article is grounded in a three-way cross-national comparison based on interviews with comparable professionals in France, Norway, and the United States. With its focus on the evening hours, it reveals three contrasting sets of evening zoning practices in the three countries, bringing to light the often overlooked cultural dimensions of the work-life transitional zone. While the article takes a first step in analyzing these cross-national differences, however, the focus on professionals makes it difficult to extrapolate these findings to the evening routines of the French or Norwegian working population as a whole. Indeed, it cannot speak to the question of whether the cross-societal differences apparent among these professionals also apply to the working classes of the three societies under study. Future cross-national research oriented to the study of temporal conventions would therefore do well to include members of both the professional classes and the working classes. Such research could open up new vistas by exploring societal-level conventions that extend across class boundaries, further illuminating the murky cultural foundations of the work-life nexus.

In both of the European cases, noncapitalist or even noneconomic constraints—whether historical residues of precapitalist culture (France) or an idealization of private life as a quasi-sacred sphere (Norway)—impose cultural templates shaping the appropriation of the evening hours. From the standpoint of workplace productivity and efficiency, the consequences of these differences are somewhat surprising. The Norwegians emerge as more preoccupied with efficiency than their peers in France and the US. Their focus on what one could call life sphere hygiene means that they likely work harder, hour for hour, than their American and French counterparts. While the French professionals often arrive later in the morning and take a longer lunch break than either the Norwegians or the Americans, they make it a priority to be present in the office during the sacrosanct early evening hours. Whereas the Americans differ in terms of the density of their workdays, the Norwegian professionals are all alike inasmuch as they must work very efficiently during the core workday if they are to free up their evenings. But this preoccupation with efficiency is a result of decidedly noncapitalist cultural expectations.

The divergence between these three settings invites us to revisit the proposition that relentless competitive pressures are necessarily exerting a homogenizing influence which suppresses cross-societal differences in the economic arena (Vertovec 2009). This claim, common in studies of late postindustrial capitalism, has often been lodged with regard to the transnationalized professional classes who populate the corporate landscape in the United States and Europe. But the stubborn persistence of cross-national cultural differences cannot be denied. Even among business professionals, the evening routines in social democratic Norway, a country at the extreme end of the egalitarianism spectrum in terms of both class and gender, differ from the evening routines in corporatist France or the neoliberal United States. In the Norwegian case we see that, in a country with a relatively egalitarian and collectivized form of postindustrial capitalism, cultural imperatives can play an essential role in protecting private life—or at least particular temporal zones—from the temporal depredations of postindustrial capitalism. This portrait of the evening hours shows that, contrary to some of the more sweeping assertions of the transnationalization literature, the professional classes of Europe and the United States do not lead identical working lives or private lives. Despite the similarities of the three countries' postindustrial economies, differing national cultures do give rise to tangible divergences in terms of evening routines and temporal zoning practices more generally. These differences surface even when we compare professionals at the leading edge of globalizing trends in the workplace.

Acknowledgments I wish to acknowledge the financial and logistical support of a number of institutions and programs, including the National Science Foundation, the University of California's LERF, the FLAS program, the American-Scandinavian Foundation, the UC Berkeley Departments of Sociology and Scandinavian Studies, the Cornell Department of Sociology, the Department of Sociology and Human Geography at the University of Oslo, and the Center for the Sociology of Organizations. The paper has benefited from the feedback, comments, and insights provided by many scholars, including Neil Fligstein, Arlie Hochschild, Mary Blair-Loy, Marion Fourcade, Victor Nee, Trond Petersen, Neil Smelser, Richard Swedberg, Michèle Lamont, Laura Robinson, Jean-Pascal Daloz, Stanley Brandes, Brian Lande, Benjamin Moodie, Jennifer Silva, Sigtona Halrynjo, Karin Widerberg, Odd Frank Vaage, Øyvind Wiborg, Gabe Ignatow, Ofer Sharone, Helene Aarseth, Jen Hook, Victor Chen, Erling R. Larsen, Selma Lyng, Ingjerd Skafle, Heidi Nicolaisen, Abby Larson, Erin York Cornwell, and Benjamin Cornwell. David Smilde is also due thanks for providing valuable advice on the manuscript. Finally, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the interviewees who graciously and generously spent several hours of their precious time sharing details of their busy lives.

References

Aarseth, Helene. 2007. Optimalisering på alle livsområder?: Likestilt familieliv in ny økonomi. In *Arbeidslivets Klemmer: Paradokser i det nye arbeidslivet*, ed. Elin Kvande and Bente Rasmussen, 59–80. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.

Adam, Barbara. 1995. *Timewatch: The social analysis of time*. Oxford: Polity Press.

Alesina, Alberto, Edward Glaeser, and Bruce Sacerdote. 2005. *Work and leisure in the US and the EU: Why so different? NBER working paper #11278*. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Alford, Robert. 1998. *The craft of inquiry: Theories, methods, evidence*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bailyn, Lotte. 1993. *Breaking the mold: Women, men, and time in the new corporate world*. New York: Free Press.

Bartolomé, Fernando, and Paul Lee Evans. 1979. Professional lives versus private lives: Shifting patterns of managerial commitment. *Organizational Dynamics* 7: 3–29.

Blair-Loy, Mary. 2003. *Competing devotions: Career and family among women executives*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Blair-Loy, Mary, and Jerry Jacobs. 2003. Globalization, work hours, and the care deficit among stockbrokers. *Gender and Society* 17(2): 230–249.

Bloom, Nick, Tobias Kretschmer, and John Van Reenen. 2009. Work-Life balance, management practices and productivity. In *International differences in the business practices and productivity of firms*, ed. Robert B. Freeman and Kathryn L. Shaw, 15–54. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Boltanski, Luc. 1982. *Les Cadres: La formation d'un groupe social*. Paris: Les editions de minuit.
Burda, Michael. 2008. Time use and work timing. In *Working hours and job sharing in the UE and the USA: Are Europeans lazy? Are Americans crazy?* ed. Tito Boeri et al., 15–45. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Clawson, Dan, and Naomi Gerstel. 2014. *Unequal time: Gender, class, and family in employment schedules*. New York: Russell Sage.
Cooper, Marianne. 2000. Being the 'Go-to-Guy': Fatherhood, masculinity, and the organization of work in Silicon Valley. *Qualitative Sociology* 20: 465–480.
Cousin, Olivier. 2004. *Les Cadres: Grandeur et incertitude*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
D'Iribarne, Philippe. 1989. *La logique de l'honneur – Gestion des enterprises et traditions nationales*. Paris: Seuil.
D'Iribarne, Philippe. 2006. *L'étrangete Française*. Paris: Seuil.
D'Iribarne, Philippe. 2009. National cultures and organisations in search of a theory: An interpretative approach. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management* 9(3): 309–321.
DeVault, Marjorie. 1991. *Feeding the family*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Dupré, Michel, and Michel Lallement. 2007. Regulation of working time in SMEs of the information and communication technology sector in France. *New Technology, Work and Employment* 22: 66–82.
Dupuy, François. 2005. *La fatigue des élites: Le capitalisme et ses cadres*. Paris: Seuil.
Ellingsæter, Anne Lise. 2009. *Vår Tidens Moderne Tider*. Oslo: Universitetsforlag.
Ellingsæter, Annelise, and Lars Gulbrandsen. 2007. Closing the childcare gap: The interaction of childcare provision and mothers' agency in Norway. *Journal of Social Policy* 36: 649–669.
Epstein, Cynthia Fuchs. 1999. *The part-time paradox: Time norms, professional life, family and gender*. New York: Routledge.
Fischer, Claude. 2008. Paradoxes of American individualism. *Sociological Forum* 23(2): 362–372.
Flaherty, Michael G. 2011. *The textures of time: Agency and temporal experience*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Gadea, Charles. 2003. *Les cadres en France: Une énigme sociologique*. Paris: Éditions Belin.
Gershuny, Jonathan. 2000. *Changing times*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Gershuny, J., and O. Sullivan. 2003. Time use, gender, and public policy regimes. *Social Politics*. 10(2): 205–228.
Glorieux, Ignace, Inge Mestdag, and Joeri Minnen. 2008. The coming of the 24-hour economy? *Time & Society* 17(1): 63–83.
Gregg, Melissa. 2011. *Work's intimacy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Gullestad, Marianne. 1992. *The art of social relations: Essays on culture, social action, and everyday life in modern Norway*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
Halrynjo, Sigtona. 2007. Alltid beredt? Arbeids og familiedilemmær i møte med arbeidslivets formelle og uformelle spilleregler i et sort konsern. In *Arbeidlivets klemmer: Paradokser i det nye arbeidslivet*, ed. Elin Kvande and Bente Rasmussen, 81–106. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
Halrynjo, Sigtona, and Selma Lyng. 2009. Preferences, constraints, or schemas of devotion? Exploring Norwegian mothers' withdrawals from high-commitment careers. *The British Journal of Sociology* 60: 321–343.
Halrynjo, Sigtona, and Selma Lyng. 2010. Fars forkjørett - mors vikeplikt? Kjønn, karriere, or omsorgansvar i eliteprofesjoner. *Tidsskrift for samfunnsforskning* 51: 249–280.
Hamermesh, Daniel, and Elena Stancanelli. 2014. *Long workweeks and strange hours. Working Paper 20449*. Cambridge: NBER.
Heinz, J., Robert Nelson, Rebecca Sandefur, and Edward Laumann. 2005. *Urban lawyers: The new social structure of the bar*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Henni, Azdine, and Françoise Piotet. 2004. Vous avez dit 35 heures? In *Les cadres au travail: Les nouvelles règles du jeu*, ed. Anousheh Karvar and Luc Rouban, 57–72. Paris: La Découverte.
Hewlett, Sylvia, and Carolyn Buck Luce. 2007. *Seduction and risk: The emergence of extreme jobs*. New York: Center for Work-Life Policy.
Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1997. *The Time bind: When work becomes home and home becomes work*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
Jacobs, Jerry, and Kathleen Gerson. 2004. *The time divide: Work, family, and gender inequality in the 20st century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Lallement, Michel. 2003. *Temps, travail et modes de vie*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
Lee, Sangheon, Deirdre McCann, and Jon Messenger. 2007. *Working time around the world*. London: Routledge and ILO.
Lewis, David J., and Andrew J. Weigert. 1981. The structures and meanings of social time. *Social Forces* 60: 432–462.

Luker, Kristin. 2009. *Salsa-dancing into the social sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Maxwell, Joseph. 1996. *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
Medalia, Carla, and Jerry Jacobs. 2008. Working time for married couples in 28 countries. In *The long work hours culture: Causes and consequences*, ed. Ronald Burke and Gary Cooper, 137–158. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.
Melbin, Murray. 1987. *Night as frontier: Colonizing the world after dark*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
Merton, Robert. 1984. Socially expected durations: A case study of concept formation in sociology. In *Conflict and consensus: Essays in honor of Lewis A. Coser*, ed. Walter Powell and Robert Robbins, 262–283. New York: Free Press.
Moen, Phyllis, Kathleen Christensen, and Ralph Gomory. 2013. Time work by overworked professionals: Strategies in response to the stress of higher status. *Work and Occupations* 40(2): 79–114.
Nippert-Eng, Christena. 1995. *Home and work: Negotiating boundaries through everyday life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Perlow, Leslie. 2001. Time to coordinate: Toward an understanding of work-time standards and norms in a multicountry Studysof software engineers. *Work and Occupations* 28: 91–111.
Perlow, Leslie. & Jessica Porter. 2009. Making time off predictable and required. *Harvard Business Review* 87(10): 102–109, 142.
Piotet, Françoise. 2007. *Emploi et travail: Le grande écart*. Paris: Armand Colin.
Poster, Winifred, and Srirupa Prasad. 2005. Work-family relations in transnational perspective: A view from high-tech firms in India and the United States. *Social Problems* 52: 122–146.
Reid, Erin. 2015. Embracing, passing, revealing, and the ideal worker image: How people navigate expected and experienced professional identities. *Organization Science*. doi:10.1287/orsc.2015.0975.
Ruppanner, Leah, and Matt Huffman. 2013. Blurred boundaries: Gender and work-family interference in cross-national context. *Work and Occupations* 32: 1–27.
Sabelis, Ida H.J. 2007. The clock time paradox. In *24/7*, ed. Robert Hassan and Ronald Purser, 255–278. Stanford: Stanford Business Books.
Sharone, Ofer. 2004. Engineering overwork: Bell-curve management at a high-tech firm. In *Fighting for time*, ed. Arne Kalleberg and Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, 191–218. New York: Russell Sage.
Shih, Joanna. 2004. Project time in Silicon Valley. *Qualitative Sociology* 27: 223–245.
Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. 1998. *Basics of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
Tabboni, Simonetta. 2001. The idea of social time for Norbert Elias. *Time & Society* 10: 5–27.
Vertovec, Steve. 2009. *Transnationalism*. London: Routledge.
Viard, Jean. 2002. *La sacre du temps libre: La société des 35 hueres*. Paris: Éditions de L'Aube.
Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies*. New York: The Free Press.
Wharton, Amy, and Mary Blair-Loy. 2002. The overtime culture in a global corporation. *Work and Occupations* 19(1): 32–63.
Williams, Jon, and Heather Boushey. 2010. *The three faces of work-family conflict*. Washington: Center for American Progress.
Yin, Robert. 1994. *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
Zeruvabel, Eviatar. 1981. *Hidden rhythms*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jeremy Schulz is currently a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for the Study of Societal Issues, UC Berkeley. He has published on a broad range of themes, including consumption, methods, work and culture. Recent publications include "Talk of Work" published in *Theory and Society* and "Shifting Grounds and Evolving Battlegrounds," published in the *American Journal of Cultural Sociology.* While earning his PhD at UC Berkeley, he carried out the dissertation research which forms the basis for this article, examining the influence of societal environments and cultural contexts on the ways in which French, Norwegian, and American professionals experience and organize work, family, and private life. Afterwards, he held an NSF funded postdoctoral fellowship at Cornell University's Center for Economy and Society. At present he is launching projects dealing with new forms of peer-to-peer consumption, as well as pursuing his interests in wealth, debt, and qualitative methods such as multi-method QCA. More information about his work can be found at www.schulzsociology.org