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Janet Gornick earned her Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University in 1994. She is Professor of Political Science and Sociology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY). Since 2006, she has also served as Director of LIS (formerly, the Luxembourg Income Study), a cross-national data archive and research center located in Luxembourg. Most of her research is comparative, across the industrialized countries, and concerns social welfare policies and their impact on family well-being, gender equality, and income inequality.

She is co-author or co-editor of three books: Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment (Russell Sage Foundation, 2003); Gender Equality: Transforming Family Divisions of Labor (Verso Press, 2009); and Income Inequality: Economic Disparities and the Middle Class in Affluent Countries (Stanford University Press, 2013). In 2006-2007, she served as Guest Editor for "Work-Family Reconciliation Policies in High-Employment Economies: Policy Designs and their Consequences," a special double issue of the Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice. She is currently working on a book about how and why inequality varies across the American states.

She has published articles on gender, employment, and social policy in several journals, including the American Sociological Review; the Annual Review of Sociology; Social Forces; the Socio-Economic Review; the Journal of European Social Policy; the European Sociological Review; Social Science Quarterly; Social Forces; Monthly Labor Review; and Feminist Economics. She has also presented her work in popular venues, including The American Prospect; Dissent; and Challenge Magazine.

Her research has been supported by several sponsors, including the Russell Sage Foundation, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Social Security Administration, the U.S. National Science Foundation, the National Governors' Association, the World Bank, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

She serves on several advisory boards, including A Better Balance: The Work and Family Legal Center; the Journal of European Social Policy; IPUMS-International; Statistics Canada - the Advisory Committee on Labour and Income Statistics; the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP); and the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR).