

# Women leaving work out West [CA] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

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A new study by Statistics Canada shows that women have been participating in the work force at increasingly higher rates since the Second World War. But traditionally, women in the West have been far more likely to have jobs than women in the East.

Since 1989, however, women in the east have made huge gains, mainly because of higher education levels and more day care, Statscan says. As a result, the dichotomy between Canada's regions has markedly diminished.

"The convergence in trends between Quebec and Alberta is particularly striking," writes the study's author Francine Roy, a senior economist for Statcan's Canadian Economic Observer.

The pattern is particularly noticeable for women with children under six years old. In Alberta, the participation rate for this group dropped by a full percentage point in 2005, to 64.9 per cent. That's 10 points below the comparable rates in Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

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And that's not because the mothers' husbands are rich from Alberta's oil and they choose not to work, Ms. Roy said. She found that family income levels made a difference for only 2,000 Alberta women.

Rather, she points to availability of daycare. Alberta has the smallest share of children in daycare &mdash; 43 per cent, Statscan said. Indeed, daycare capacity has actually fallen over the past decade, and now the province has fewer than 48,000 spots for 163,400 mothers of pre-schoolers.

Meanwhile, Quebec has radically improved the availability and affordability of daycare, at the same time as more women have become more educated, Statscan said. As a result, young Québécois mothers are now participating in the workforce at rates well above the national average.

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- reprinted from the Globe and Mail

**Related link:** REPORT: From she to she: Changing patterns of women in the Canadian labour force <sup>[2]</sup>

**Region:** Canada <sup>[3]</sup>

Quebec <sup>[4]</sup>

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