

Le temps dans tous ses états: temps de travail, temps de loisir et temps pour la famille à l'aube du XXI^e siècle ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

- Summary in pdf (in English) ^[2]

- Policy brief in pdf (in English) ^[3]

Text of the news release:

A good balance between work and leisure time is essential to a healthy life.

But as the IRPP study being released today reveals, for many Canadians the so-called "leisure-society," in which everyone has more free time, is more a myth than a reality.

Examining time-use surveys, including the most recent one carried out in 2005, author Gilles Pronovost (Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières) finds that the long-run trend of declining work hours and increasing leisure has reversed abruptly in the last eight years. In particular, working parents have seen their workloads increase significantly & by as much as five hours per week for mothers.

Looking at the time parents spend taking care of their children, he observes that, until recently, working parents had somehow succeeded in balancing their professional and family responsibilities. But 2005 data show that now this fragile equilibrium is broken. Both fathers and mothers spend less time taking care of their children than they did in 1998.

Findings include:

- From 1998 to 2005, the average work week in the active population increased from 44.6 to 46.3 hours, while leisure time declined from 31.5 hours to 29.5 hours, effectively erasing two decades of gains on that front.
- Over the same period, fathers' average work week increased from 49.1 to 53.2 hours and mothers' from 39.4 to 44.1 hours.
- During the 1990s, fathers increased the time they devoted to household chores and care of the children, while mothers increased both their working hours and their leisure time. But this trend toward closing the gender gap in caring and working came to a halt in 2005.
- Parents with children under the age of five are the most likely to report being time-stressed & two-thirds of mothers and just over half of fathers.
- Working parents in Quebec spend more time with their children than do other Canadians. This suggests that family-friendly policies adopted in Quebec since the late 1990s have helped parents better balance work and family responsibilities.

Pronovost concludes, "the notion of a lack of time comes down to at least three different but related phenomena: an increase in professional responsibilities among more educated people; more emphasis on personal activities such as sports and culture; and greater stress on 'family time,' especially in the attention paid to young children."

In terms of policy directions, the author suggests that we need to design solutions that facilitate more flexibility in terms of work. He cites "comp time" (by which extra hours worked can be banked for future leave), unpaid leave and on-site child care facilities, as good examples on which to base future policies.

Related link: - Full study (in French) ^[4]

Region: Canada ^[5]

Quebec ^[6]

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Links

^[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/07/02/le-temps-dans-tous-ses-%C3%A9tats-temps-de-travail-temps-de-loisir-temps-pour-la-famille-%C3%A0-l'aube-du-xxi%C3%A9-si%C3%A8cle.pdf>

^[2] <https://irpp.org/newsroom/archive/2007/0201sume.pdf> ^[3] http://irpp.org/fr/pm/archive/pmvol8no1_pb_e.pdf ^[4]

